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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

The bulb issue

10 early spring plants for dappled shade

REDISCOVERING THE FLOWER BRICK
the art of displaying spring flowers

HOW TO MAKE natural plant supports

Sustainability and painterly beauty
in Victoria, Australia

SMALL GARDEN IDEAS
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[1] As rated by Willis Towers Watson. [2] MSCI All Country World Index.

Editor's letter

Set within more than 50 acres of parkland, the walled garden at Belcombe Court is a little over one acre. On a steeply sloping site, in spring it is planted with rows of tulips. Selected primarily for cutting, the list of cultivars grown at Belcombe reads like a roll call of the most prized and sought-after tulips – from the square-petalled to the scented to the exquisitely flashed. Anna Pavord visits to find new favourites.

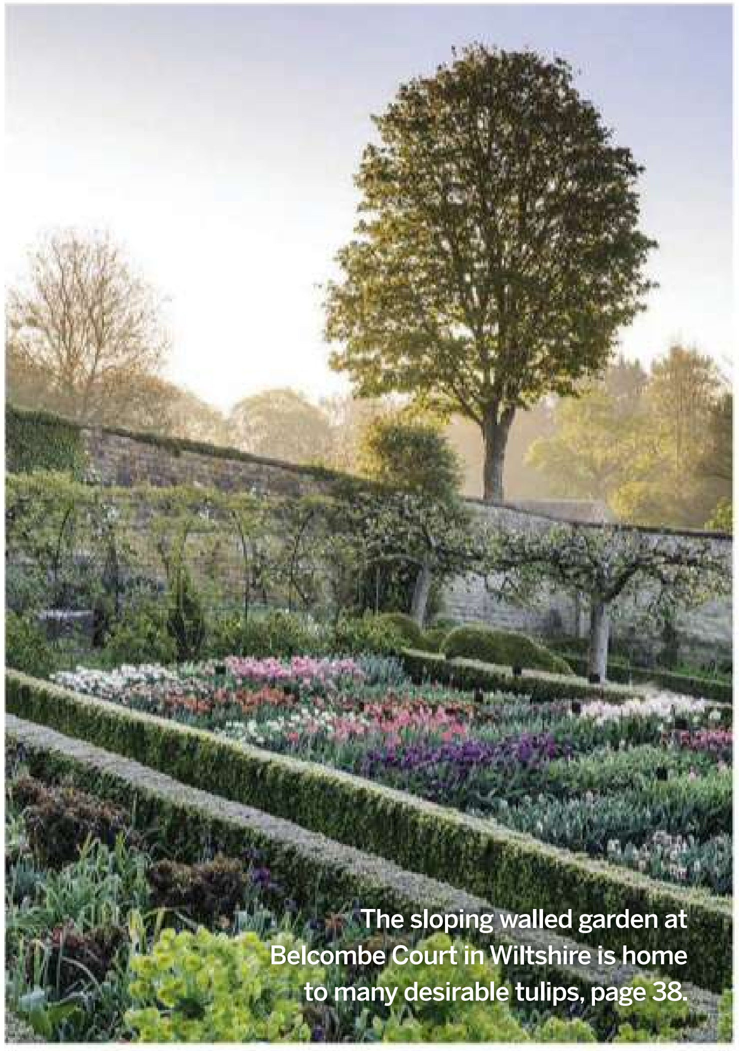
On page 56 Matt Collins, head gardener at the Garden Museum, visits a very modern meadow in a compact garden in Kent. Flower rich, the garden's design is informed by a love of nature, wildlife and conservation, and has been inspired by visits to British nature reserves to see wildflowers and wildlife alike. Perennials, annuals and native grasses are complemented by clipped, evergreen yew buttresses, pittosporum domes and architectural birch trees that provide structure within the softness. The garden hums with wildlife including butterflies, moths, hedgehogs, slow worms and pipistrelle bats. Matt also shares some of its designer's tips for meadow making.

Jenny Barnes, head gardener at Cottesbrooke Hall offers a practical guide to making handcrafted plant supports. Using raw materials sourced from the garden or locally, they are beautifully structural even before plants come into growth.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR



JASON INGRAM

The sloping walled garden at Belcombe Court in Wiltshire is home to many desirable tulips, page 38.

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RICHARD BLOOM

For her own garden, designer Amanda Buckland has created a very modern meadow, page 56.

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Tulipa 'Abu Hassan'
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- Join plantsman Jimi Blake on a tour of the great gardens of County Wicklow – page 12
- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 26
- Win one of two Cobra MX51S80V cordless lawnmowers† – page 123

† Competition open to UK residents only.

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Isabel Bannerman
Isabel visits Mothecombe House in Devon, page 62. *"A long-term seaside fantasy for me, Mothecombe is a Queen Anne stately set within walled pleasure gardens."*

Matthew Biggs
Matthew explores a very special nursery, page 78. "*Bluebell Arboretum & Nursery is an inspirational treasure trove, filled with 'woody' plants it is the finest of its kind in Britain.*"

Claire Takacs
Claire photographs the beautiful gardens of Australian nursery Lambley, page 84. *"I love this garden, which is dedicated to beauty and the seeking of best-quality plants for a dry climate."*

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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Gardens Illustrated is available for licensing and syndication.
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Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. ISSN 0968-8920.

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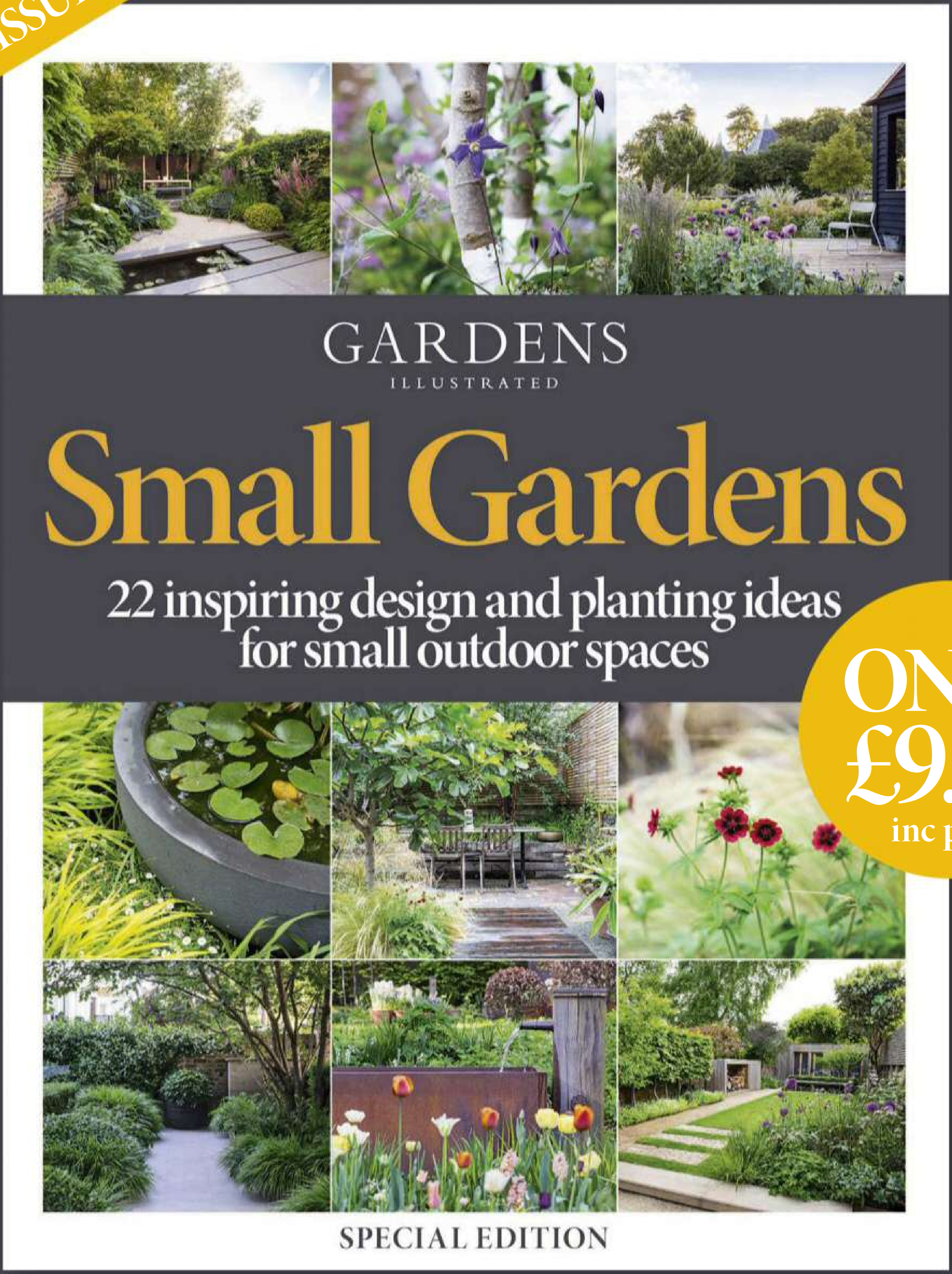

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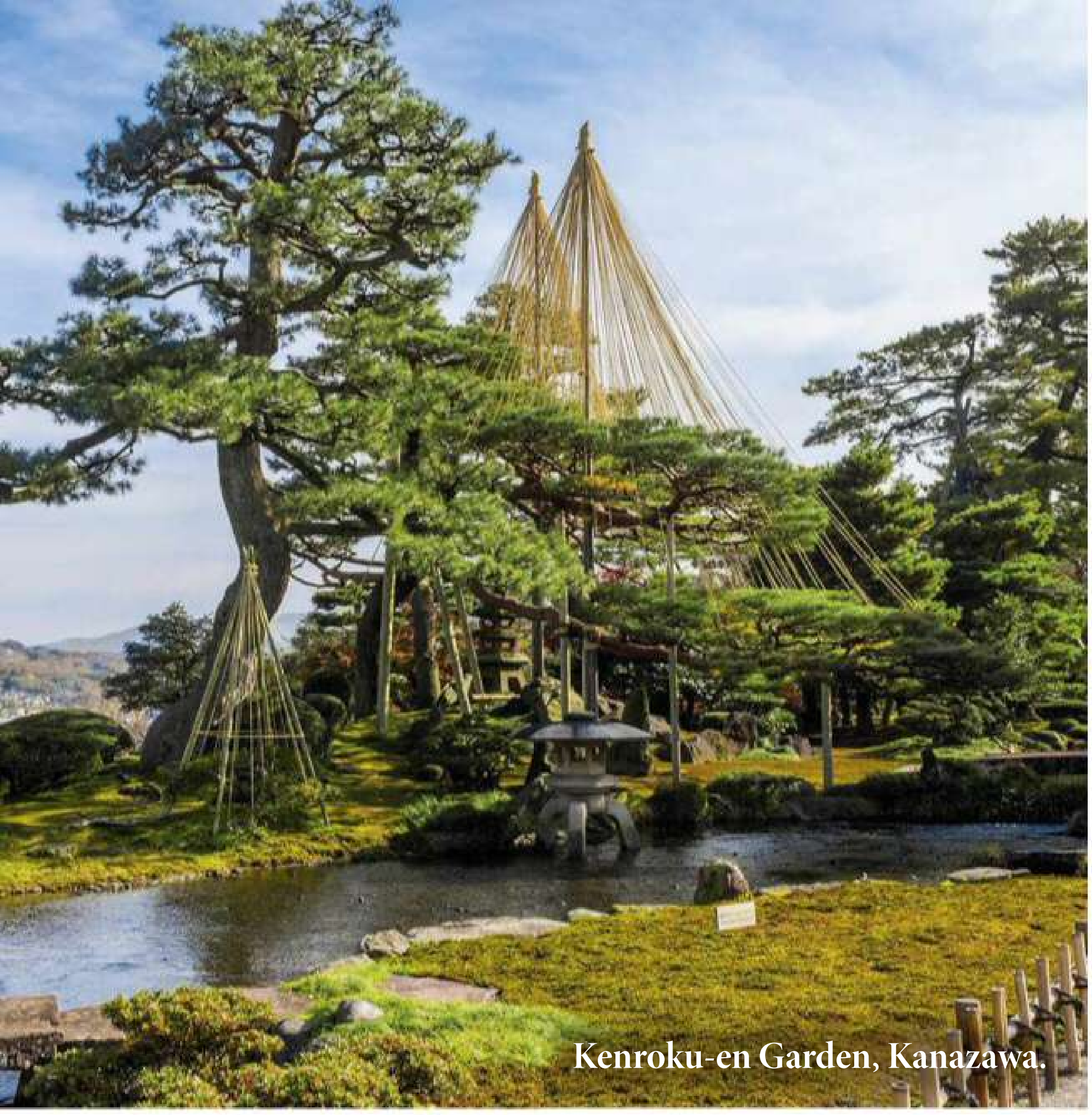
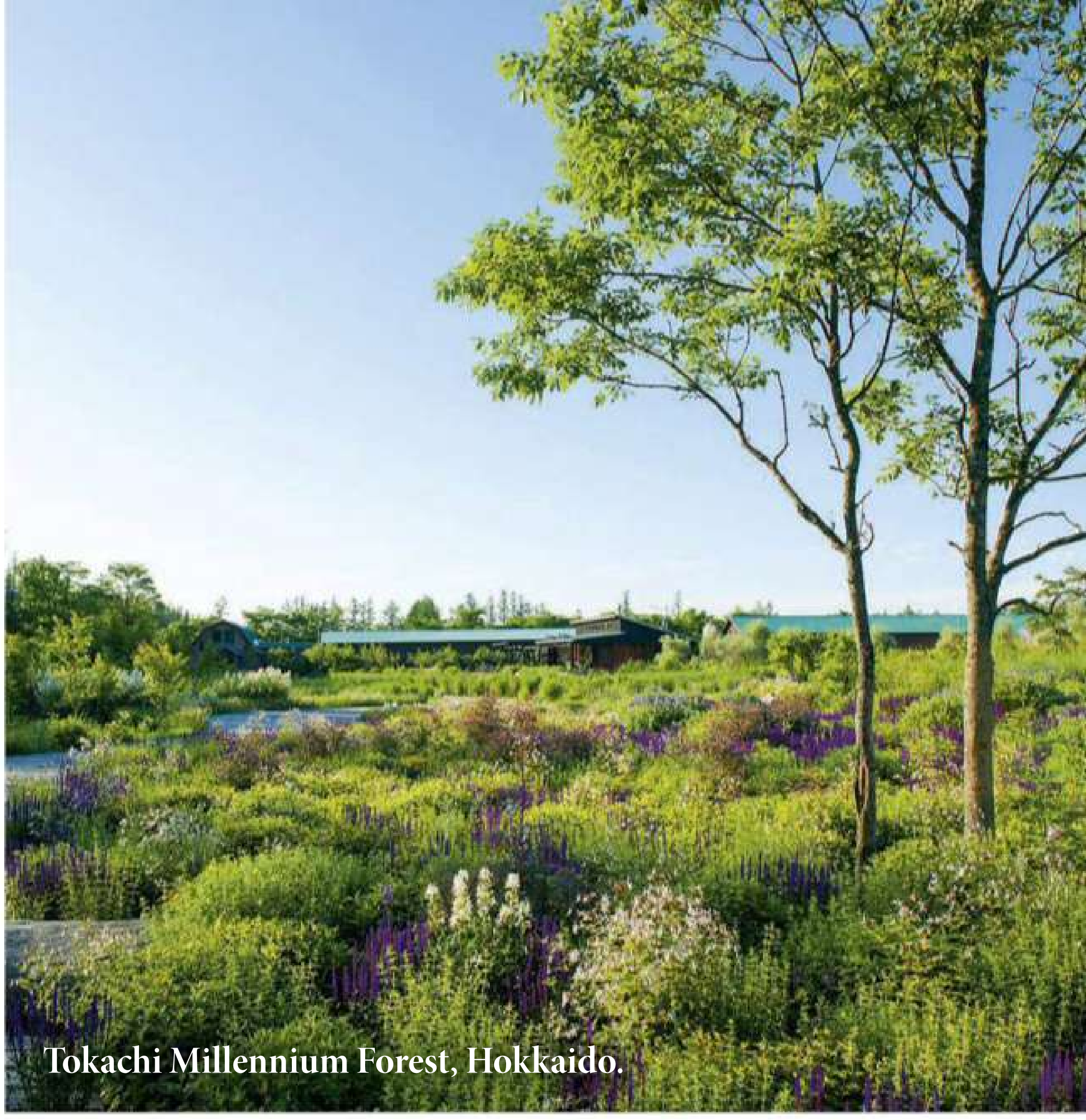


Kenroku-en Garden, Kanazawa.



Tokachi Millennium Forest, Hokkaido.

16-30 SEPTEMBER 2021

JAPAN'S HIDDEN GARDEN GEMS

Travel with Japanese garden expert Hannah Gardner on this far-reaching, two-week itinerary and discover some of Japan's most compelling gardens

TOUR LEADER

Hannah Gardner Kew-trained horticulturist, Hannah works as a head gardener and garden consultant, with a particular passion for studying plant communities worldwide – including time she spent in Japan.

The tour starts with a visit to the internationally celebrated contemporary gardens of **Tokachi Millennium Forest**, designed by Dan Pearson and situated on Japan's most northerly island, Hokkaido. You'll learn about the spirit of nature and sense of place from head gardener and international speaker Midori Shintani, as well as enjoying a cultural workshop and foraged forest lunch prepared by the gardeners. We'll also study the stunning autumn flora of the nearby mountains. Then we transfer to Honshu, Japan's mainland, to delve into the traditional gardens, culture and the unforgettable architecture of Tokyo, Kanazawa, Kyoto and Nara, where gardens will provoke thought and delight in equal measure. Meet with the gardeners of the **Chion-in Temple** who will demonstrate the fine art of *niwaki* pruning and offer advice on the tools they use. Discover both renowned gardens and lesser-known, hidden cultural gems, such as the beautifully preserved, historic **Sumiya Pleasure House** in Kyoto. The varied landscapes we will visit meld the intimate essence of nature with the disciplines of cosmology, poetry and meditation and through Hannah's formal and informal instruction, your journey will unpick the complexity and seek to understand the history and meaning of these serene and spiritual landscapes.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £6,280 (a single supplement of £1,140 is levied by the hotels).

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JOAQUIN OSSORIO-CASTILLO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; SHOGO O ZUM.

Hunting Brook Gardens.

Patthana.

7-10 SEPTEMBER 2021

CONTEMPORARY IRISH GARDENS

Join plantsperson extraordinaire Jimi Blake to explore some of the best gardens around Dublin and the Wicklow Mountains

TOUR HOSTS

Jimi Blake is a renowned gardener and plantsperson, whose own garden expresses a dynamic approach to planting. This years he's also our plant expert selecting his Plantperson's Favourites each month. He will be accompanied on the tour by host **Sophie Piebenga**, whose knowledge and love of gardens stems from her training with Kew and the National Trust.

Jimi Blake is the owner and enthusiastic gardener at **Hunting Brook Gardens** in Co Wicklow. The garden is renowned for its modern and inventive plantings, and Jimi's plant choices always excite and delight. This is where you'll start your tour and Jimi will talk you through his approach and seasonal highlights. The tour continues with Jimi taking you on to his sister **June Blake**'s small but painterly garden in Tinode, and then the garden of gardening doyenne Helen Dillon, who has recently transposed her ideas developed over several decades to a new and smaller space. You'll also discover the beautifully meditative garden **Patthana**, and the varied garden of **Ardán**, impressively located on the hilly peninsula overlooking Dublin Bay. Visits to these and further unique and considered, private and award-winning gardens allow guests to meet the owners, garner expert advice and drink in the beauty of contrasting gardens that take you right to the warm heart of the Irish gardening world. Jimi describes the trip as rolling from house party to house party, which together with comfortable accommodation and excellent food will make for a convivial trip full of garden experiences and discoveries.

BOOKING DETAILS

The price per person, based on two people sharing is £2,950 (a single supplement of £250 is levied by the hotels).

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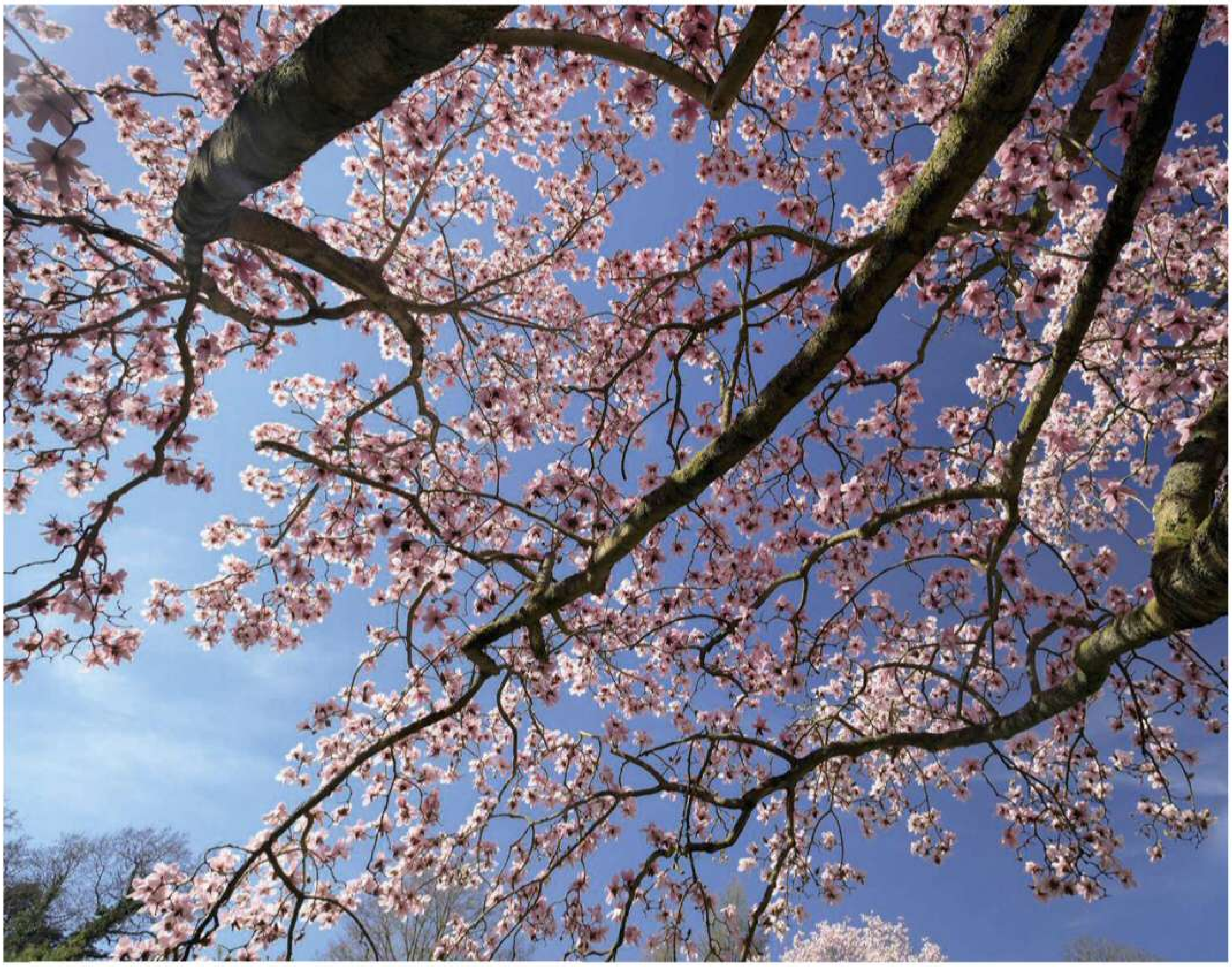

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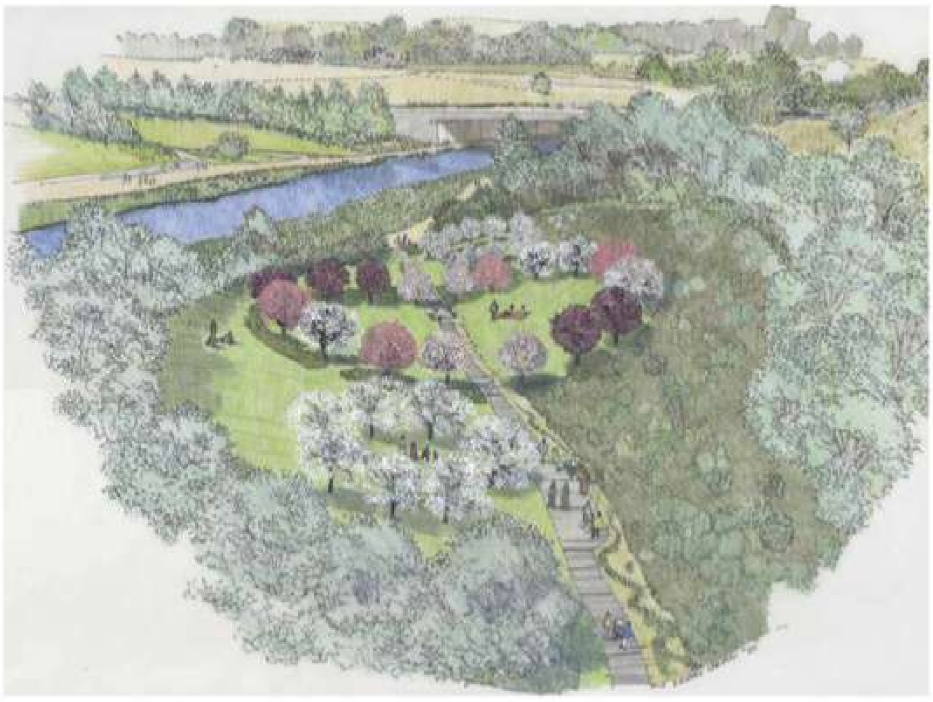
The circle of life



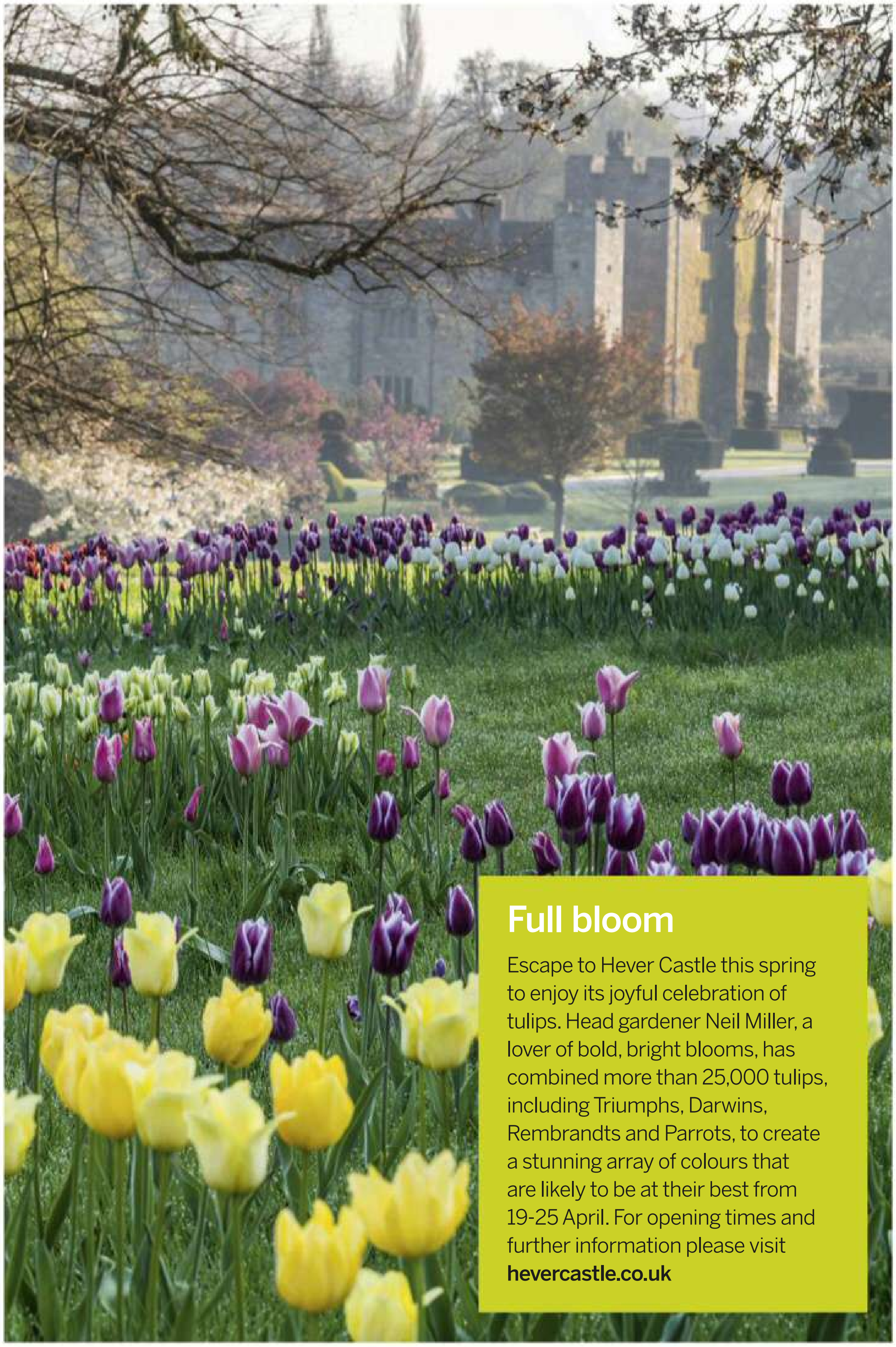
Nothing helps to lift the spirits at the start of spring quite like the burst of blossom. As we start to look forward to spending more time outdoors, the National Trust has announced an exciting new project set to start this spring. Inspired by the Japanese tradition of *hanami* – where people come together each spring to view the cherry blossom and picnic beneath the trees – the National Blossom Circle project will plant circles of trees in city areas, with the aim of creating stunning natural spaces in urban areas across the UK. The hope is the circles will help connect more people through the beauty and wonder of nature for many years to come. The first blossom circle (pictured right) will open this spring at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in east London. Future locations include Plymouth, Newcastle and Nottingham. You can find out more details and updates about this project at **nationaltrust.org**

News

COMPILED BY KATIE BEALE

Top tools

If you're looking to give your tool shed a bit of a spring clean, then look out for Fiskars new tool ranges, designed to make your life a lot easier. From strong scissors, made from recyclable materials, and lightweight and ergonomic pruners with precision-ground blades that stay sharper for longer, to a new collection of lightweight planting tools, such as the Xact Standing Bulb Planter, which takes the backache out of planting bulbs and saplings. ***fiskars.co.uk***



JOHN GLOVER / GAP PHOTOS

Full bloom

Escape to Hever Castle this spring to enjoy its joyful celebration of tulips. Head gardener Neil Miller, a lover of bold, bright blooms, has combined more than 25,000 tulips, including Triumphs, Darwins, Rembrandts and Parrots, to create a stunning array of colours that are likely to be at their best from 19-25 April. For opening times and further information please visit **hevercastle.co.uk**

SLYV AN DELEU

A touch of class

A short walk from Hauser & Wirth Somerset's main gallery, with its beautiful Piet Oudolf-designed gardens, is its small but perfectly formed gallery space Make. Housed in two rooms of a Georgian house in Bruton, the gallery is dedicated to craft and plans to reopen this month with a new exhibition, *Antipode*, that explores how vessels and containers shape our perception of the world. Featuring work by Studio MC, Akiko Hirai, Andrea Walsh and Adi Toch, whose *Pink Bowl With Pearls* is shown left, the pieces stretch the traditional boundaries of metal, clay and glass and the division between the inside and out. Until 24 April. **hauserwirth.com**

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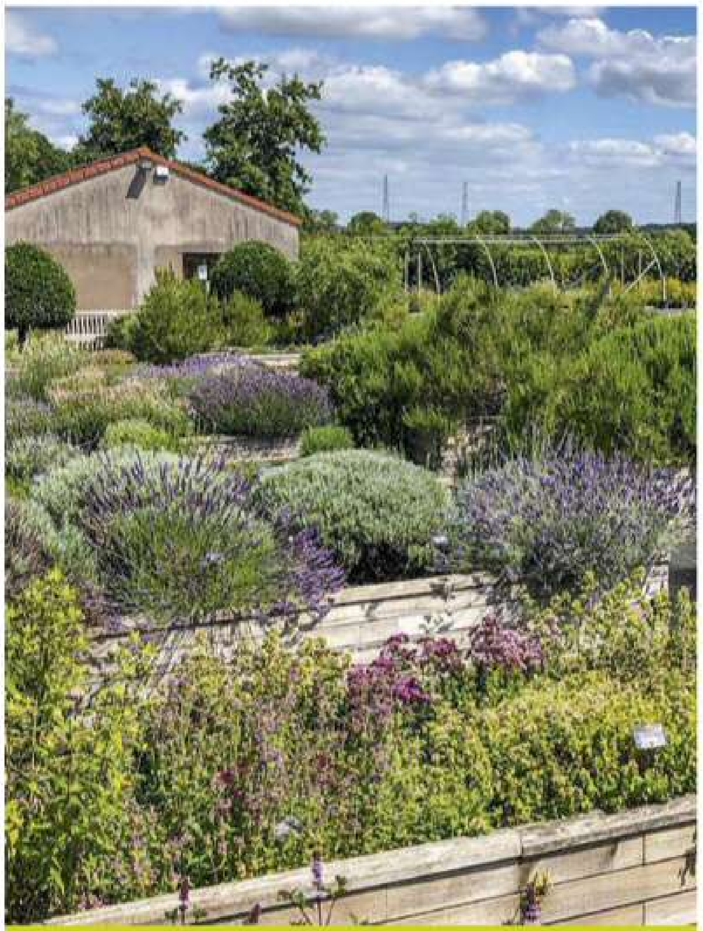
Beautiful images of gardens and the natural world decorate the gorgeous range of gifts and stationery by Wildflower Illustration Co. Designed by Rebecca McMillan and Karl Maguire, and sustainably printed in small runs in the couple's Cotswolds studio, each piece can be personalised to include a special name, date or quote. From limited-edition prints, to illustrated writing paper and greeting cards, all have been lovingly made with a real appreciation of nature. ***wildflowerillustrationco.com***

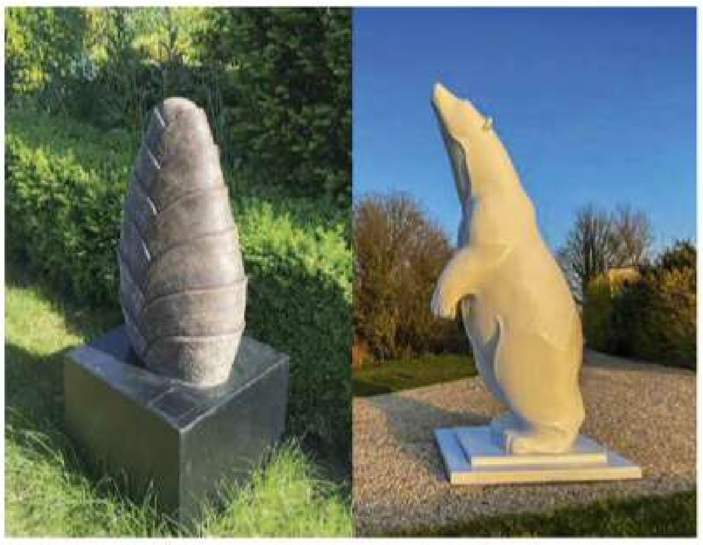
GOING ON A PLANT HUNT

The Plant Hunters Fairs are always a great place to find top-quality, traditionally grown plants, and this year its series of events kicks off on 17 April at Arley Hall in Cheshire, famed for its double herbaceous borders. An impressive selection of nurseries and artisans have already been confirmed for the event, including Mayfields Plants and Tissington Nursery. For further details on entry visit **arleyhallandgardens.com**



Hooray for herbs

With all our fingers firmly crossed for the big opening up in June, we're looking forward to the first Jekka's HerbFest this summer. The three-day celebration of all things herbal takes place at Jekka's Herbetum near Bristol on 2-4 July, and will be packed with talks and workshops on how to grow and care for herbs, advice on their culinary and medicinal uses, and will also feature stalls from local artisans and artists, live music and delicious food. Tickets for the event cost £30 per day and go on sale online on 2 April. **jekkas.com**



Sculpture season

Anyone who loves garden sculpture has much to look forward to this month. The Cotswold Sculptors Association, *Creating Spaces* exhibition, featuring work by a variety of artists such as Karen Edwards whose *Grass Seedhead* is shown above, takes places in Malmesbury until 31 May. Meanwhile in Dorset, Sculpture by the Lakes opens again this month with 200 pieces on show, including Adam Binder's polar bear *Boris*. **cotswoldsculpturesassociation.co.uk; sculpturebythelakes.co.uk**

INSPIRATION AWAITS

With spring now very much in the air, most of us are drawing up our lists of gardens to visit over the summer. The National Garden Scheme has lined up more than 3,000 gardens to open in 2021 – 657 of them for the first time. Among the new gardens opening for the summer are Crossroads (pictured), a stunning garden with wildlife-friendly perennial meadows in Staffordshire and 152A Victoria Rise, a small city space in south London. All visits will need to be pre-booked this year, so be sure to make your choices early at **ngs.org.uk**

Greenhouse of your dreams

If you're feeling inspired to make 2021 the year to invest in that greenhouse you've long been hankering after, then it's worth taking some time to consider the best style and size for your needs. Greenhouse experts, such as Hartley Botanic, can offer advice on whether you will need planning permission, on where best to position your greenhouse, what the optimum size is for your garden, and will offer a range of different styles from the traditional Hartley Cottage, pictured above, to contemporary studio styles and bespoke glasshouses. For details visit **hartley-botanic.co.uk**

Sustainable essentials

Nothing beats stylish sustainable gardening tools, and The Worm that Turned has released a brilliant Eco Soil Blocker set (£49.95). Designed for the eco-conscious gardener, the soil blockers create blocks of compressed soil with a little indentation in the top ready for seed sowing. Included in this kit is a Mini 4 tool, 20 Cell soil blocker and a pack of cube inserts. For more great gardening products visit **worm.co.uk**

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BRED BY

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Peter Moore is a retired commercial plant propagator who started plant breeding as a hobby. Since his first plant was launched at Chelsea Flower Show in 1989, Peter has bred more than 30 plants.

Every year Peter gives a percentage of his royalties to a range of charities including the RHS.

***Buddleja* 'Pink Pagoda'**
A delightfully scented *Buddleja*, excellent for attracting butterflies to your garden

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With orange/red foliage in both spring and autumn plus rose pink flowers that resemble bubbly champagne, a must for the garden

For more information on these and other plants bred by Peter, plus a list of stockists, see Peter's website **www.bredbypetermoore.co.uk**

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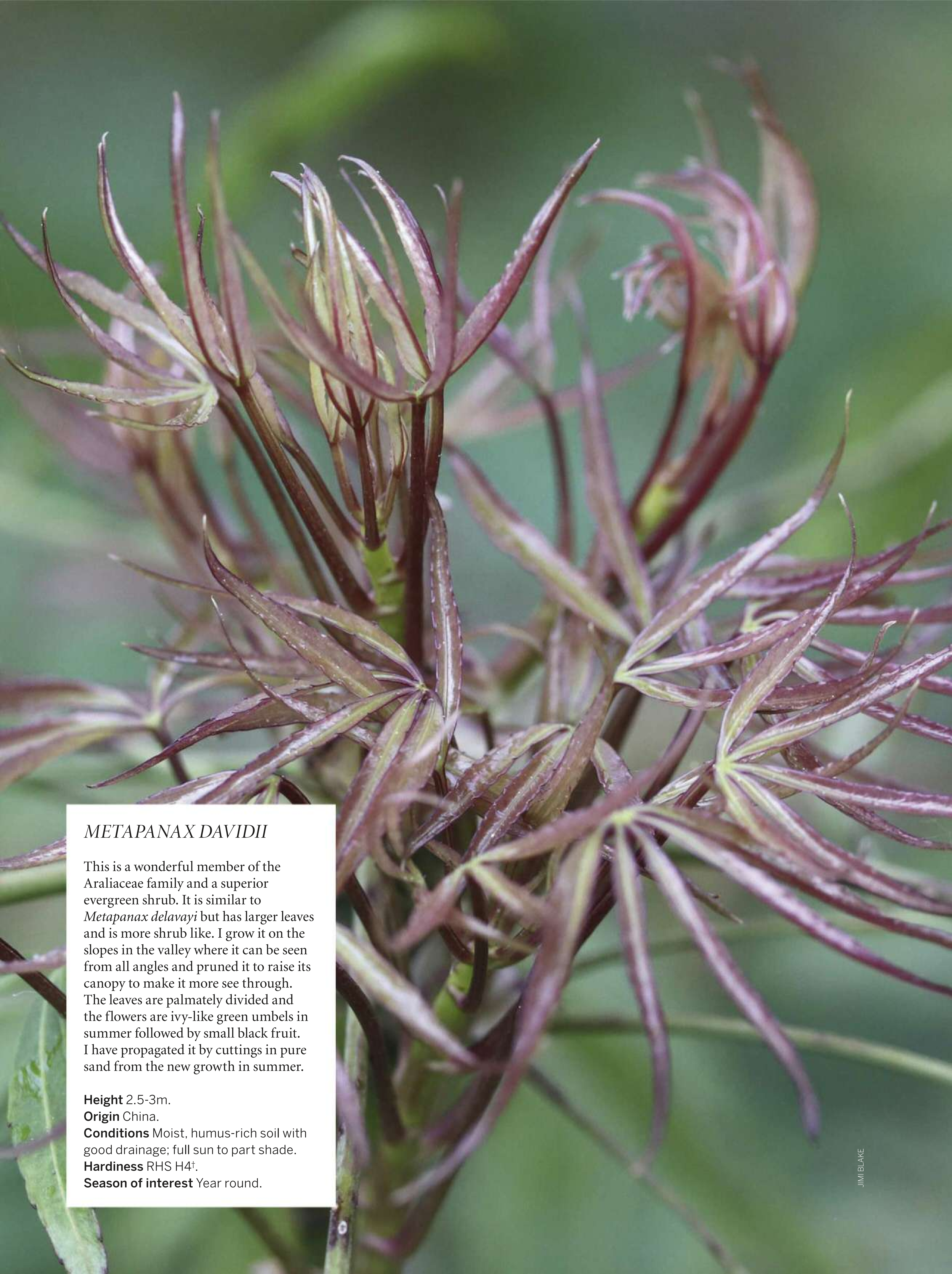


JIMI BLAKE

METAPANAX DAVIDII

This is a wonderful member of the Araliaceae family and a superior evergreen shrub. It is similar to *Metapanax delavayi* but has larger leaves and is more shrub like. I grow it on the slopes in the valley where it can be seen from all angles and pruned it to raise its canopy to make it more see through. The leaves are palmately divided and the flowers are ivy-like green umbels in summer followed by small black fruit. I have propagated it by cuttings in pure sand from the new growth in summer.

Height 2.5-3m.
Origin China.
Conditions Moist, humus-rich soil with good drainage; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4[†].
Season of interest Year round.

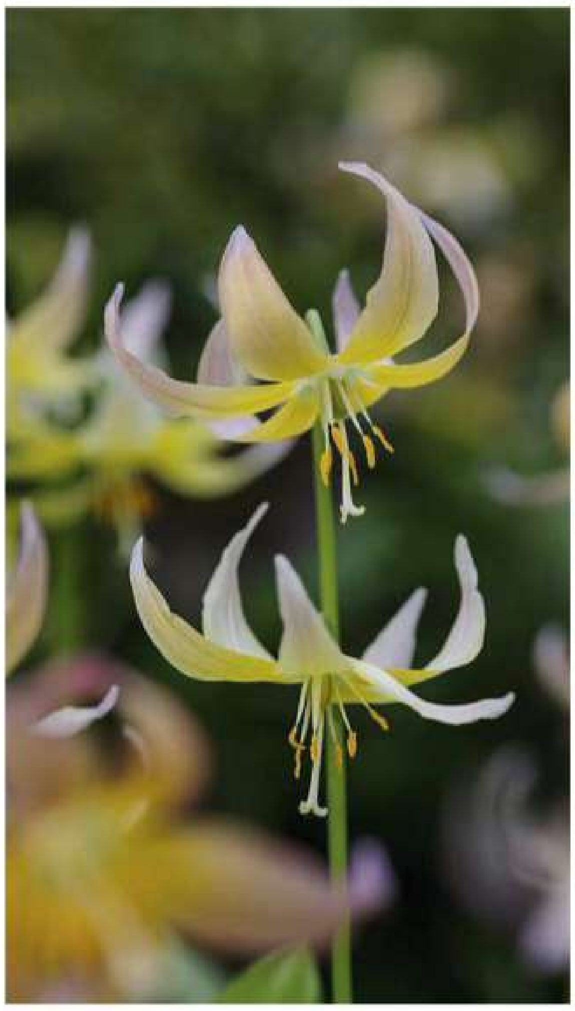
CHARLIE HOPKINSON

April plants

With spring in full swing, Jimi's choices lean towards flowers that will brighten dappled shade, including a gloriously coloured erythronium and a delicately beautiful epimedium

WORDS JIMI BLAKE

Jimi Blake is the owner creator of Hunting Brook Gardens. **huntingbrook.com**



JASON INGRAM

ERYTHRONIUM 'JOANNA'

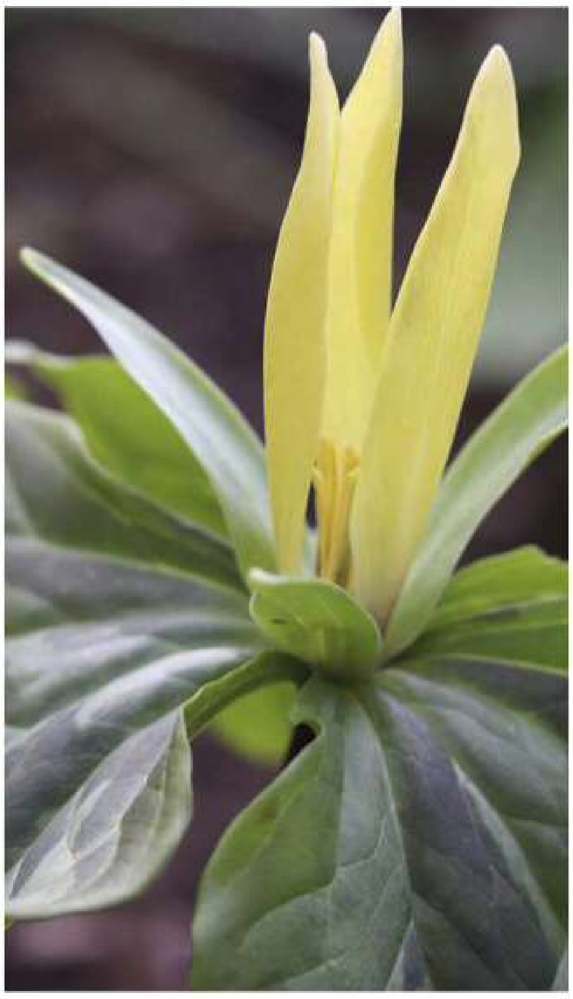
The April plant fairs, when they return, are the best place to track down erythroniums as actual plants. You often see them on sale as dried-up bulbs in autumn, which often don't grow. This cultivar was raised by Willem van Eeden in the Netherlands by open pollinated seed. With its pale creamy-yellow flowers that unusually turn deep apricot as they mature, this is one of the most beautiful in my *Erythronium* collection. I am slowly building up my collection by propagating them by division as the leaves turn yellow after flowering. I also propagate them by seed sown fresh in early summer. AGM*.

Height 35cm.
Origin Garden (species North America).
Conditions Good woodland compost; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest April.

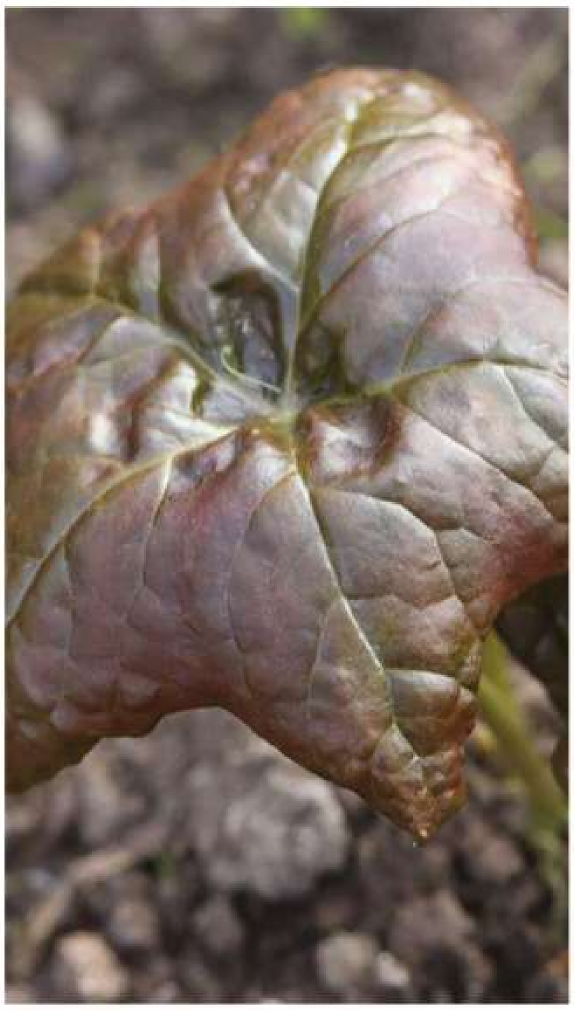
TRILLIUM CHLOROPETALUM 'BOB GORDON'

I was very lucky to get this trillium gifted to me by Billy Moore a few years ago. Billy was given the trillium seedlings from the wonderful, late gardener Bob Gordon. One of these seedlings had clear-yellow flowers that Billy grew on, named after Bob, and eventually brought to the Alpine Garden Society show in Dublin in 2017, where it was awarded the Farrer Medal for the best plant in show. I give this a top dressing of leaf mould in autumn to feed the plant and keep the moisture in, and thankfully it's starting to bulk up for me.

Height 60cm.
Origin Garden (species North America).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest April to May.



RICHARD MURPHY



JIMI BLAKE

PODOPHYLLUM 'RED PANDA'

I am definitely in a *Podophyllum* collecting phase. This is a hybrid of *Podophyllum delavayi* and *Podophyllum pleianthum* from the Northwest Garden Nursery in Oregon, USA. This is one of those plants that I fell in love with after seeing it in a garden in Seattle. The new leaves are a copper colour in spring and turn green as they mature and have large red flowers hidden beneath the foliage in May. I suggest growing it in dappled shade as the sun scorched the leaves on mine last summer. I am propagating this by root cuttings taken in autumn.

Height 45cm.
Origin Garden (species China).
Conditions Rich, moisture-retentive soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest Spring to autumn.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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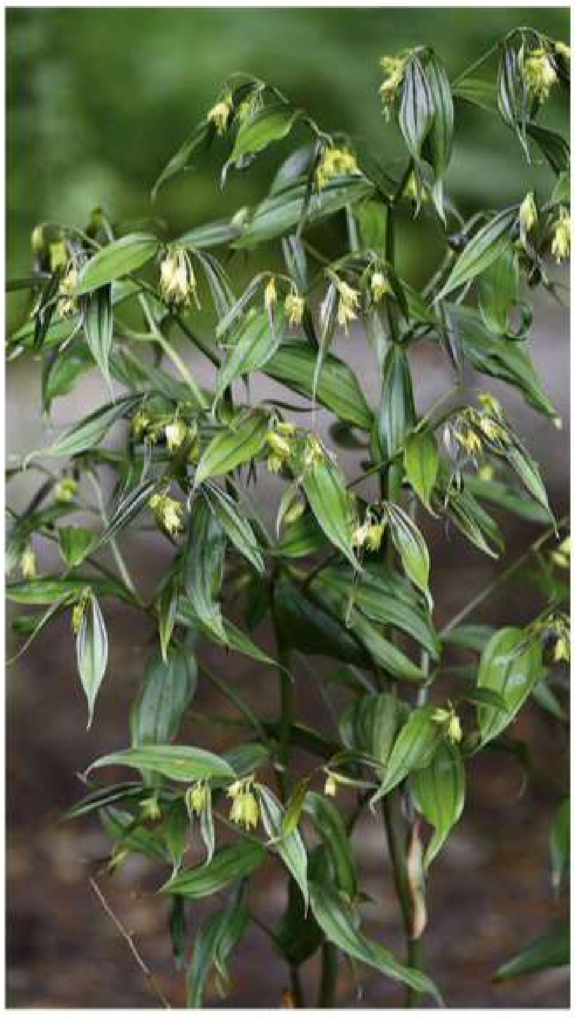
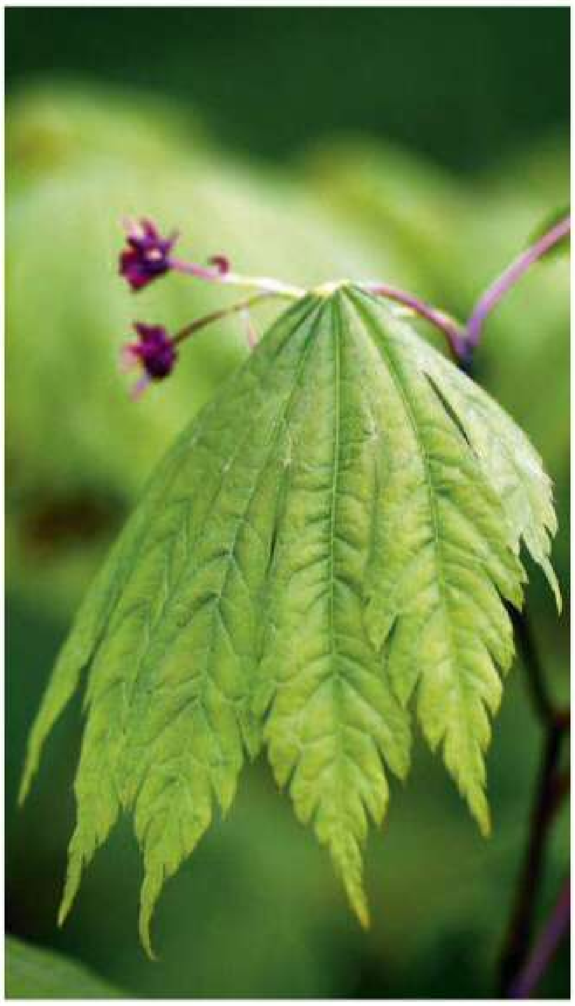
Acer japonicum 'Aki-hi' is one of my favourite small trees with long red pendulous flowers in late spring and spectacular autumnal foliage

DISPORUM LONGISTYLUM 'GREEN GIANT'

What an absolute cracker of a woodland plant. This was discovered and selected by American plantsman Dan Hinkley in Sichuan in China. It has spectacular bamboo-like stems with glossy green leaves and pendulous, fragrant, cream flowers followed by black berries through the winter. Mine stays evergreen through the winter until the east winds burn the foliage. At this point, I cut down all the previous year's stems to reveal the snouts of the new stems poking up. I have propagated it successfully from division and am also trying it from seed this spring.

Height 1.2m.
Origin China.
Conditions Fertile well-drained soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.
Season Spring to autumn.


RICHARD MURPHY


RICHARD MURPHY

ACER JAPONICUM 'AKI-HI'

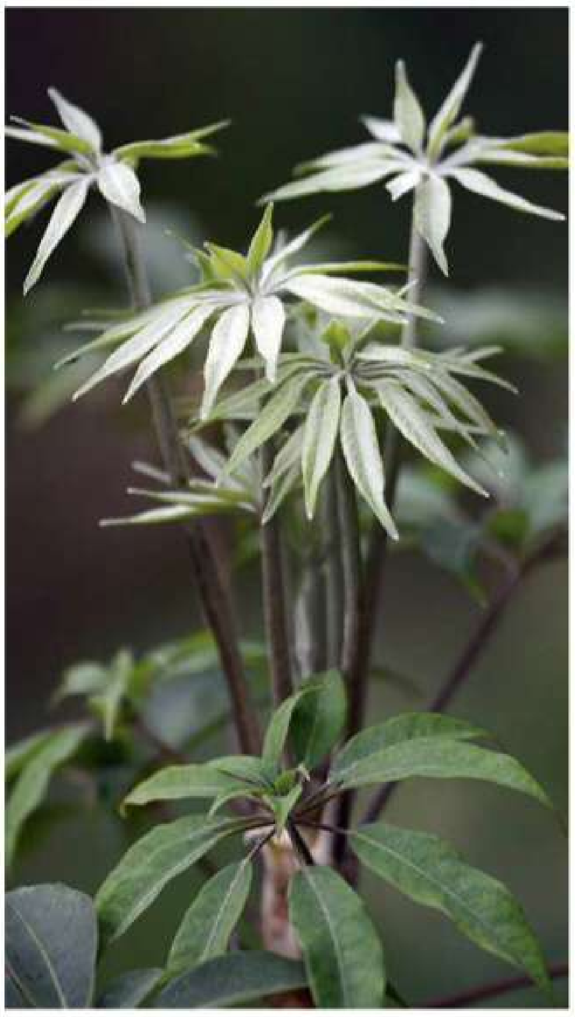
This is one of my favourite small trees. It's similar to *Acer japonicum* 'Vitifolium' but with larger leaves that have a purple-brown blush to them. It has long, red, pendulous flowers in late spring to early summer and spectacular autumnal oranges and reds. I have planted this in an area of the garden that includes several other acers underplanted with a range of woodland plants, including podophyllums and epimediums. This a tree that was on my want-list for many years and I eventually found it at Larch Cottage Nurseries in Cumbria.

Height 3m.
Origin Garden (species Japan).
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; sun to partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.
Season of interest Spring to autumn.

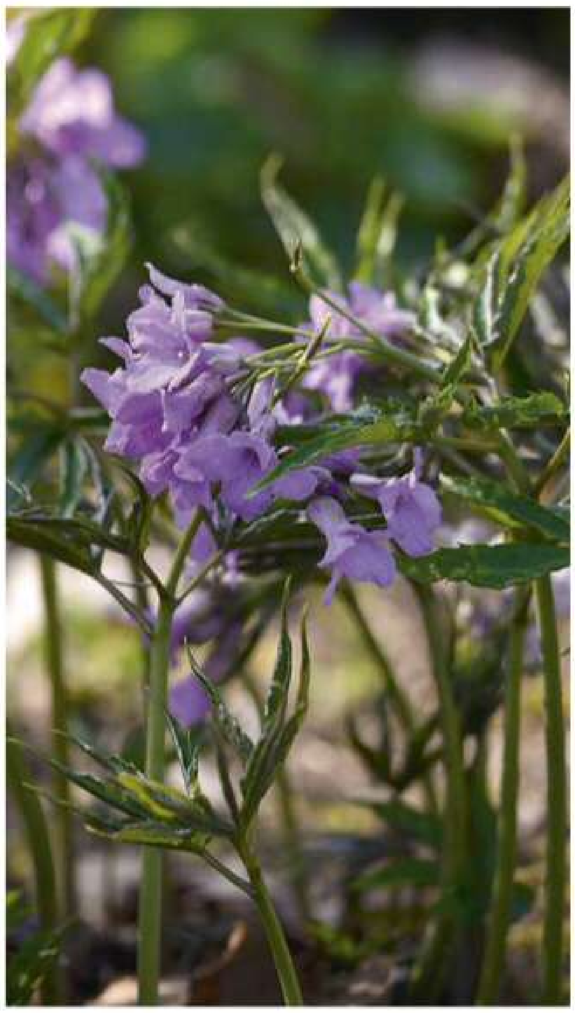
SCHEFFLERA KORNASII

A small, slow-growing tree with wonderful new silver growth and palmate leaves. Scheffleras seem to do best for me on the south-facing slopes of the valley where they are sheltered from strong winds and have excellent drainage. I have had good success propagating them as cuttings in pure sand and as seeds sown fresh. If you are sowing seeds make sure the seeds are thoroughly cleaned before sowing, otherwise they won't germinate. I bought this from Crûg Farm Plants a few years ago and it's happily settled into its life in the valley in Hunting Brook where scheffleras are repeated through the valley.

Height around 4m.
Origin Vietnam.
Conditions Well-drained soil; a sheltered, shaded location.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Year round.


RICHARD MURPHY

> Cardamines are a much underused addition to the spring garden, and *Cardamine pentaphyllos* with clusters of soft-lilac flowers is the most choice



JIMI BLAKE

CARDAMINE PENTAPHYLLOS

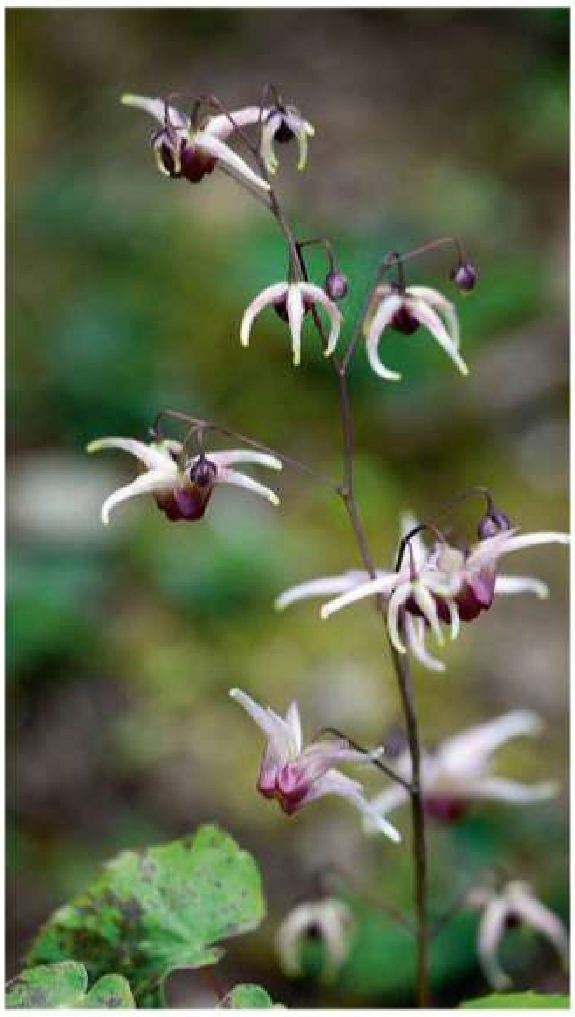
Cardamines are a great addition to the spring garden and much underused. This is definitely the most choice with its nodding clusters of soft lilac flowers in April. Some cardamines can be invasive, but this one is well behaved, and has only slowly bulked up for me. I propagated it by division and have repeat planted it in my new woodland beds. Other good cardamines I suggest growing are *C. enneaphyllos*, which has soft yellow flowers in February, *C. waldsteinii* with pure-white flowers, and the deep-purple flowered *C. glanduligera*. AGM.

Height 40cm.
Origin Western and central Europe.
Conditions Good woodland soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest April to May.

EPIMEDIUM 'DOMINO'

This epimedium was bred by the epimedium hybridiser Darrell Probst in 2004. I grow more than 100 different epimediums in Hunting Brook and this stands out as one of the best. After I cut back the old foliage in January new arrow-shaped leaves grow, which are mottled with bronze but these do not hide the flowers as with some epimediums. It has white flowers with maroon tips on each flower in spring and then sporadically flowers through the summer and autumn. This epimedium has bulked up well for me and it's one I highly recommend growing. AGM.

Height 35cm.
Origin Garden (species China).
Conditions Well-drained soil; dappled but not deep shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Spring to summer.



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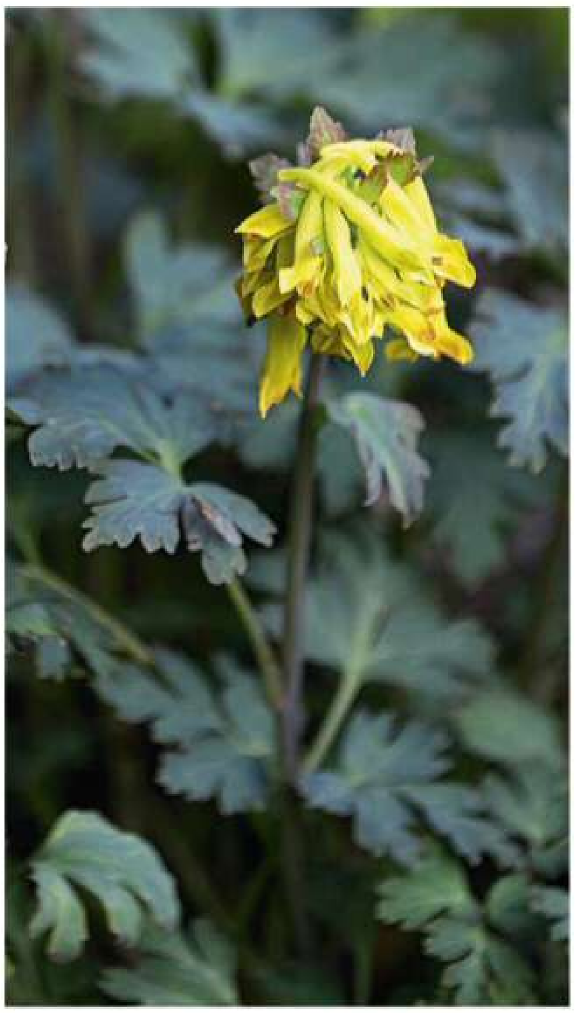

RICHARD MURPHY

CORYDALIS ELLIPTICARPA

I first saw this *Corydalis* in one of the best nurseries in the world, Far Reaches Nursery in the Pacific Northwest of the USA, but I was delighted to find it for sale at the Great Dixter Plant Fair a couple of years ago. This unusually large corydalis is slightly similar to *Corydalis temulifolia* 'Chocolate Stars' but is much more beautiful. The new foliage emerges in early spring with a dark grey-green colour to it, which is followed by bright-yellow flowers through spring and summer. This corydalis is easily propagated by division in spring or autumn.

Height 50cm.
Origin China.
Conditions Good woodland soil; dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Spring to autumn.

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STIRRING THE ROOTS

April can be a changeable month – warm and sunny one minute, with frosts the next – but it's time to get busy with your seed sowing and make the most of your harvested rhubarb

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

I am not sure that when TS Eliot described April as 'the cruellest month' in his epic poem *The Wasteland*, he had vegetable gardening in mind, but for those of us trying to get ahead with our sowing and planting in this most changeable of months, it is a description that often rings true.

Of course, the opposite also applies. April can also bring the most benign of springtime weather, along with the first genuinely warm sunshine of the year. As the greenery bursts forth, it is easy to get carried away and start believing that summer has come early. But always remember, this is the month when you need to keep both the sprinkler and the horticultural fleece equally close at hand, ready to respond to whatever the weather decides to throw at us.

What to sow

I am a great fan of leeks. I find their flavour deliciously subtle, enhancing a dish rather than dominating it as their more forceful relative the onion can often do. Fortunately for me, they grow much better than onions on our heavy soil. Start them off now by sowing seed in 12.5cm pots. Grow them on – if you are an economical seed sower, there shouldn't be any need to thin the seedlings – and plant out when they are 10cm tall, popping each one into its own individual hole in the ground. I use a dibber, aiming to make each hole around 2cm across and 10cm deep. Pop the leek seedling in, and fill the hole with water rather than soil. By winter they will have grown to a good size and be ready to use. Lately I have also been growing them in tall pots. They grow well, but won't reach the same size as those grown in the ground. No matter – I just harvest them earlier and use them while they are young and tender.

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What to plant out

By April you should have lettuce seedlings ready to plant out, either into the open ground or into pots. You will know that they are ready when they have true leaves – that is leaves that look like those of the mature plant as opposed to the rounded seed leaves – and you can see roots at the bottom of the plug. In open ground, I would plant them a trowel's length apart; a little closer in a pot. Firm the soil around them, water well and organic slug pellets or slug protection of your choice. Growing from seed is the best way to guarantee yourself a wide variety of salad crops, and you can also select what is best suited to the conditions and the time of year. Increasingly the seed companies are offering seasonal mixes of seed, which work very well. If you want to make life a little easier for yourself, go for plug plants. The choice is not so wide as if you grow from seed but it is getting better all the time. Plant out a tray of six plants every three to four weeks and you will have a supply of fresh leaves for much of the year.

What to harvest

Rhubarb has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. My maternal grandmother would stew it for us when we were children and we would have it on top of our cereal, with cream straight from the cow. I still love it that way or, when I feel inclined to make a little more effort, in my friend Michael Morphy's rhubarb, almond and ginger tart – such a wonderful combination of flavours. The key to getting a good long season out of rhubarb is to pick it regularly. This encourages growth and stops the plant running to seed. Don't let it dry out, either. Rhubarb is a thirsty crop and needs regular, thorough watering, especially if you are growing it in a large pot. I love to do this, covering the plant just as the new shoots emerge in late winter to give long, slender stems of forced rhubarb, so sweet and tender you can eat them without sugar. In autumn, once the cropping is over, add a good layer of mulch to feed the soil, conserve moisture and nourish the plant.

Jobs for April

Just as the plants you want are starting to put on growth, so too are those you don't. Weeds will compete with young seedlings for water and nutrients so act now to get on top of them, before they have a chance to set seed and multiply.

Now that the soil is getting warmer, begin direct sowing seeds such as parsnip, beetroot, cutting leaf celery (excellent for soups and stews) and herbs such as dill and parsley.

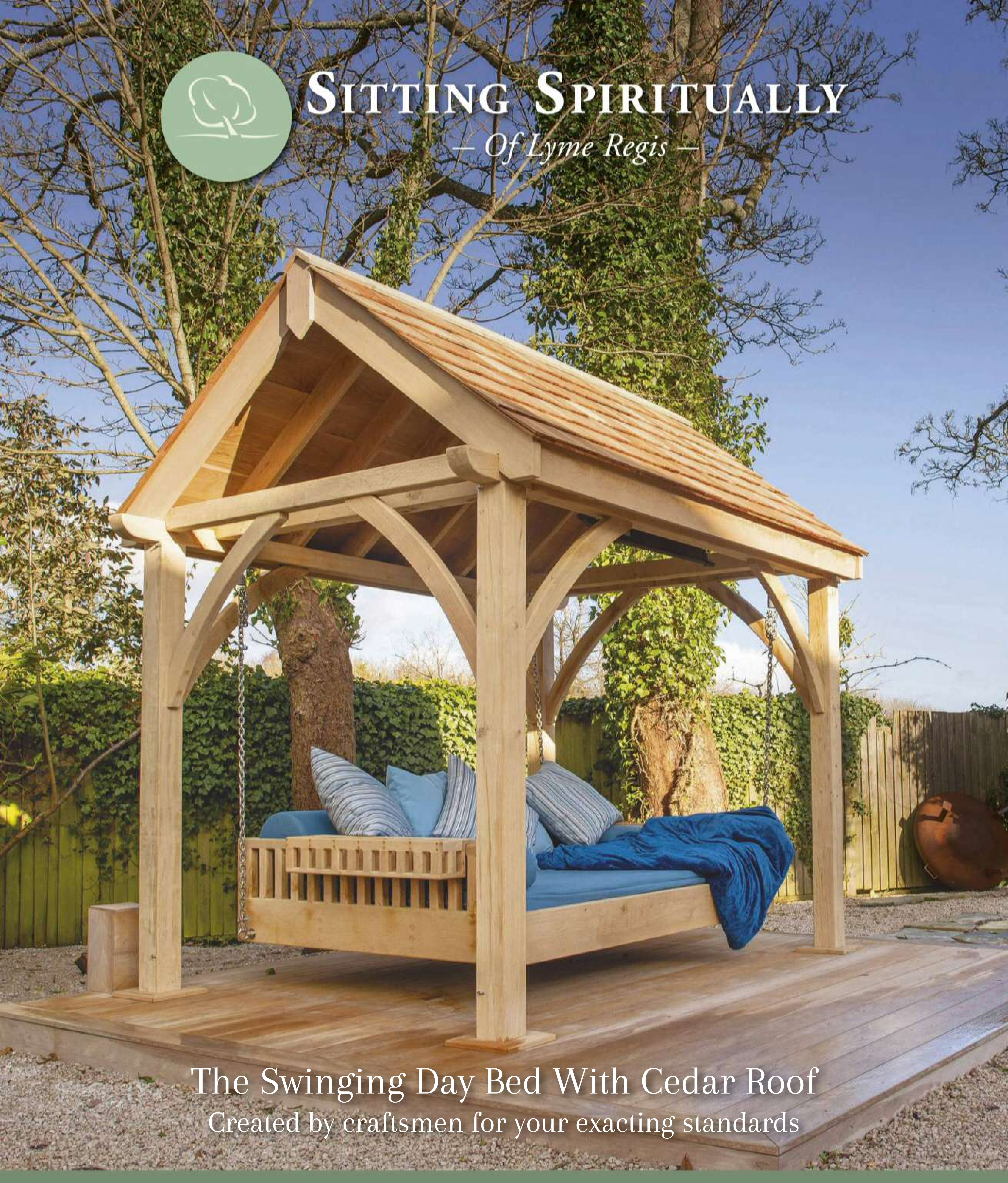
Plant out chitted seed potatoes. Watch the forecast, and be ready to cover the soil with a layer of fleece if there is any danger of a frost.

As new growth starts to appear on fruit trees and shrubs, give them a good feed. I use an organic fertiliser made from pelleted sheep manure. Sprinkle the pellets around the drop line – that is, the outer perimeter of the branches – and water well so that they start to swell and break down into the soil.

Any globe artichoke plants that were not split last year should be split now. Replant sections with a good strong root and shoot, water in well and they should be budding up before the end of the season.

Young, tender plants are irresistible to slugs and snails. People are constantly coming up with new ideas for keeping them at bay but I am loyal to my organic slug pellets for one very good reason: they work. Just remember they will need frequent topping up in the case of April showers.

You can find Aaron's recipe for rhubarb, almond and ginger tart at gardensillustrated.com/recipes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GARDENING TALENT

GRAHAM HODGSON

A gardener at Great Dixter for more than a decade, Graham enjoys an experimental approach and continues to learn as he gardens – and share his findings

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest garden memory When I was around 23, I remember coming back to visit my mother's house and suddenly realising what an amazing garden it was. Even though I had grown up there, I had never appreciated it until then. At that point something clicked, and I wanted to know a bit more.

Career inspiration I'd like to mention Rob Melville (currently design director at McLaren Automotive) with whom I did my degree and MA in Vehicle Design at the Royal College of Art, as we inspired each other along the way. This provided the foundation for my creative journey, which continues through gardening.

Favourite landscape I love the English countryside and wild spaces. I've visited many protected natural habitats throughout the UK, which has help provide an understanding of plant communities and an inspiration for planting combinations.

Worthwhile tip Always keep a sketch book or notebook with you, although I now use my phone. This means you can take notes, make drawings, take photographs… With a phone you can also add reminders to a calendar and share notes with other members of the team. It means we can work collaboratively.

Dream plant destination I'd like to visit the Scottish machairs in the Outer Hebrides and experience the way of life there and the crop-rotation system they practise. Also any of the flower-rich places along the Silk Road, which stretches from China to Turkey.

Any 'weeds' you're happy to have in your garden? I like dandelions as they provide an early spring source of nectar for bumble bees. Also self-sown autumn hawkbit (*Scorzoneroides autumnalis*) provides a late season show, appearing in cracks in the paving, and providing an insect food-source. Together these two plants help to extend the insect-foraging season in my garden.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today The challenge to go organic. It's ten years since we sprayed anything here at Dixter and although we saw gluts of pests in the first few years and were very tempted to do something about it, as we persevered, we found that the predator numbers increased to balance the pests. Today we observe and record small outbreaks when they happen but don't intervene. We generally find that the problem goes away in a couple of weeks. However, we are still not organic and at present experimenting to find a solution for slugs.

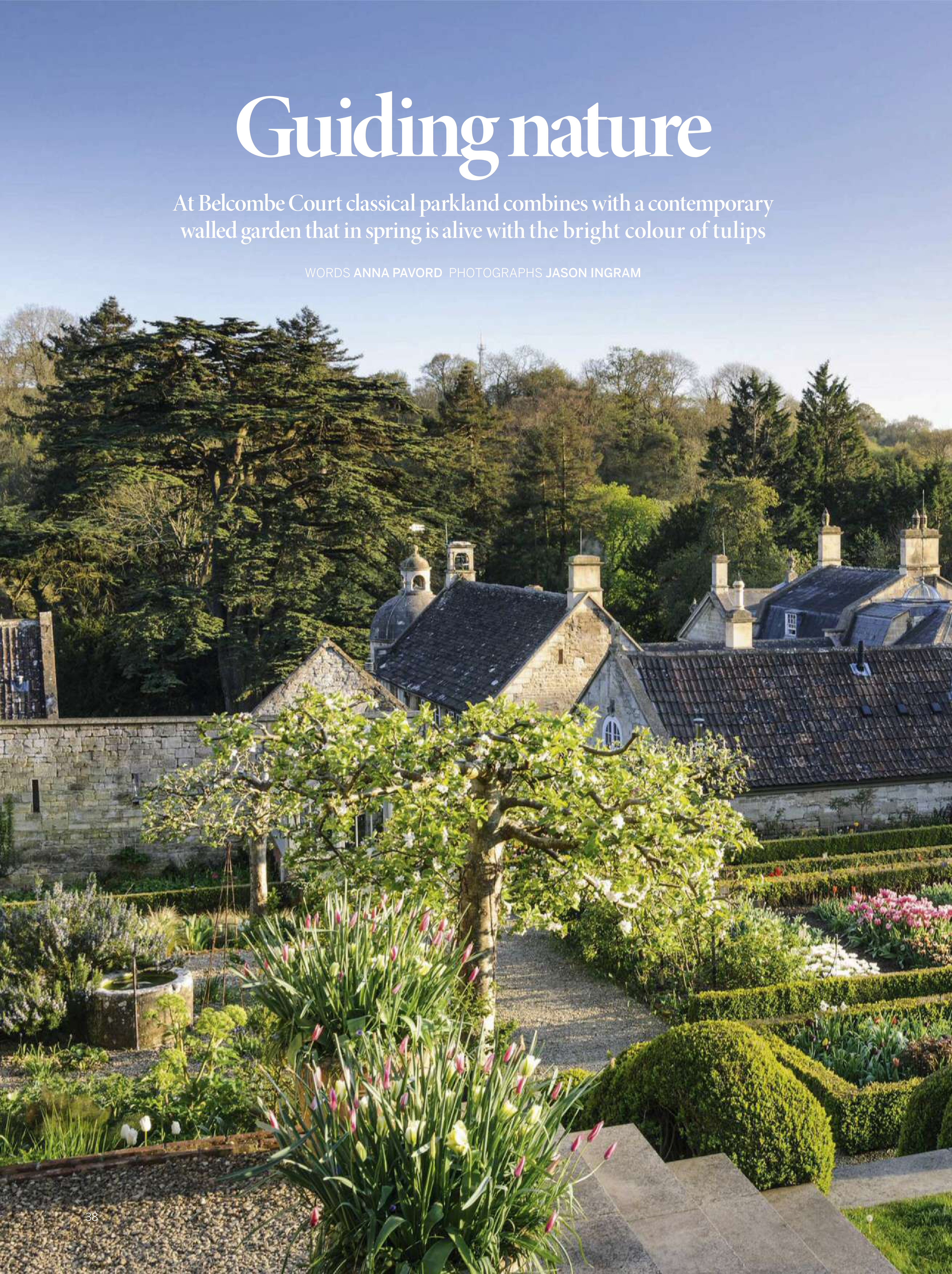
Contact Instagram graham_hodgson

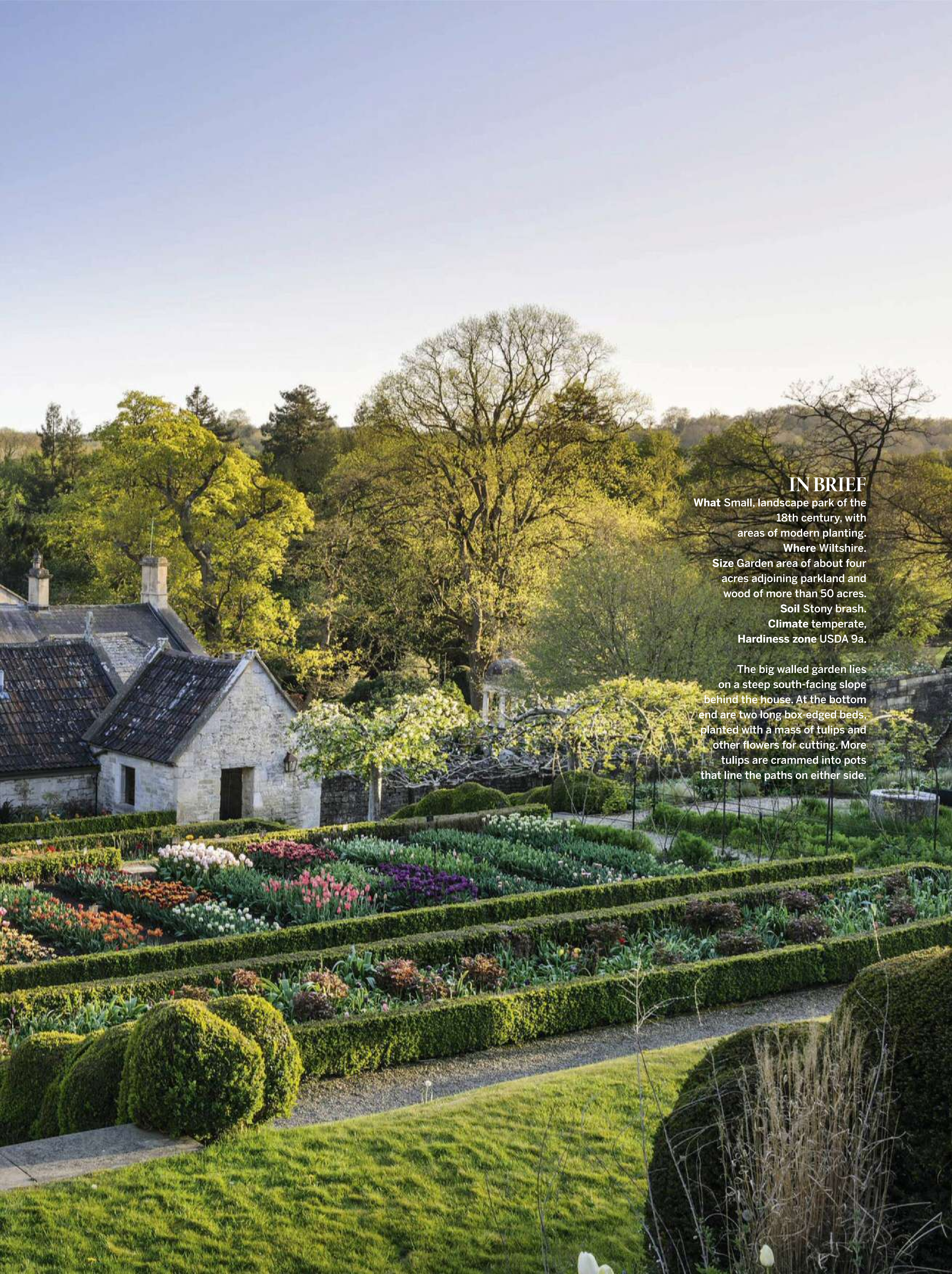
At tht point something clicked, and I wanted to know a bit more

Guiding nature

At Belcombe Court classical parkland combines with a contemporary walled garden that in spring is alive with the bright colour of tulips

WORDS **ANNA PAVORD** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

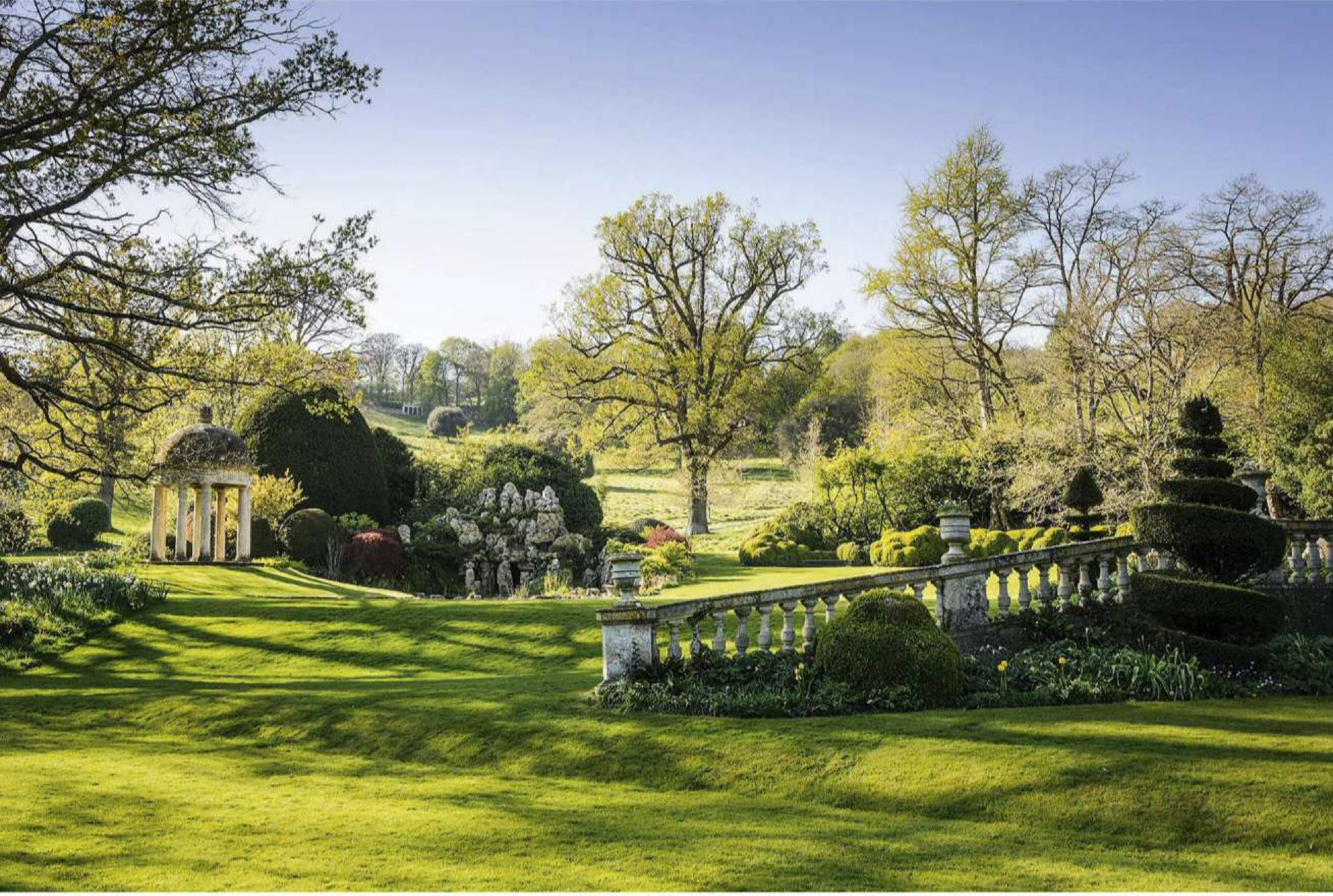




IN BRIEF

What Small, landscape park of the 18th century, with areas of modern planting.
Where Wiltshire.
Size Garden area of about four acres adjoining parkland and wood of more than 50 acres.
Soil Stony brash.
Climate temperate,
Hardiness zone USDA 9a.

The big walled garden lies on a steep south-facing slope behind the house. At the bottom end are two long box-edged beds, planted with a mass of tulips and other flowers for cutting. More tulips are crammed into pots that line the paths on either side.



Paul Weiland likes a project. Owner with his wife Caroline of magnificent Belcombe Court on the outskirts of Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, he is currently felling a tall, thick screen of x *Cuprocyparis leylandii* planted by a previous owner. Taking out the leylandii revealed a row of magnificent wellingtonias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) planted in the 19th century to screen the railway in the valley below the house. By an extraordinary coincidence, the tree surgeon who took out the hedge was related to William Lobb, who in 1853 first brought wellingtonias into the country.

"It's what I love about this place" says Paul. "It just keeps surprising us. It keeps delivering." The Weilands have been at Belcombe Court for nearly 30 years. The elegant house and the outbuildings standing around it, form a rambling cluster of mellow Bath stone. Beyond the ha-ha enclosing the garden, parkland rises quite steeply to woodlands beyond. What with grottoes and temples, ponds and waterfalls, as well as an acre and a half of walled kitchen garden, Paul has never had to worry that the projects will run out.

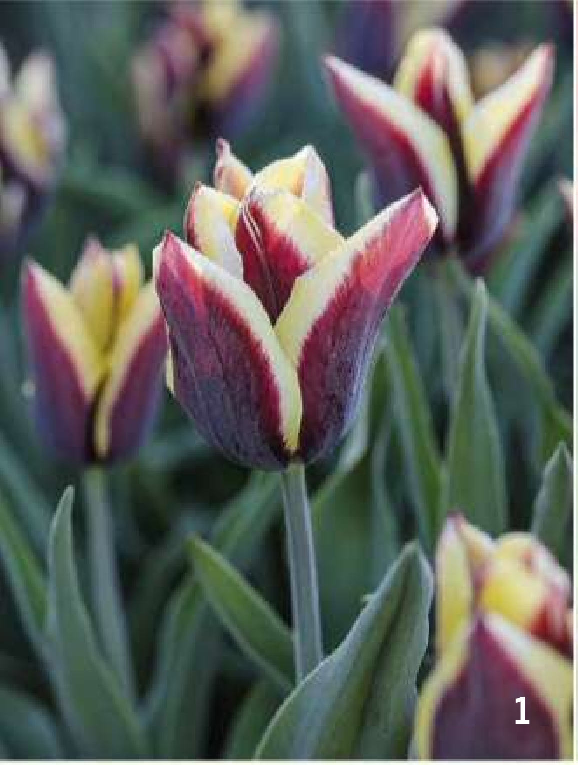
The drive comes in beside a handsome barn with a view through a stone arch to a courtyard, cobbled with ragstone in an intricate pattern. *Magnolia grandiflora* is trained out on the south-facing wall and a cloud-pruned hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) fills the centre. On the far side of the yew hedge that billows alongside the drive stands an old cedar, underplanted with a mass of snowdrops, crocuses and small daffodils. From here the lawn slopes down to the southern boundary of the garden. The grandest face of the house is round the corner, a formal façade, added in 1734, by John Wood, the architect who built the Royal Crescent in Bath.

"Our challenge was how to make the garden more contemporary, without upsetting the magic that drew us in in the first place," says Paul. Some fine yew topiary spirals were introduced in the border under Wood's formal front and swelling sweeps of box now disguise difficult slopes. A 1950s rose garden was removed and herbaceous borders on the west side of the house widened to provide a fine summer display of dark-leaved cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'), peonies, delphiniums, Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum*), iris ▷

Above Looking west from the house towards the park, the full drama of the Regency grotto comes into view. Made of tufa, it overlooks the lake, fed by a natural waterfall, cascading down on the left of the grotto entrance. Inside, a curving, dark passage is furnished with a stone seat.

Right The handsome south front of Belcombe Court, added by the architect John Wood in 1734, looks out over lawn studded with spring bulbs growing under an ancient cedar. Beyond, to the left, lie the domed rotunda and the little cottage orne, made in the Gothic style.

This Arcadian landscape of grotto, waterfall, lake and temple makes you think of grand gardens such as Stourhead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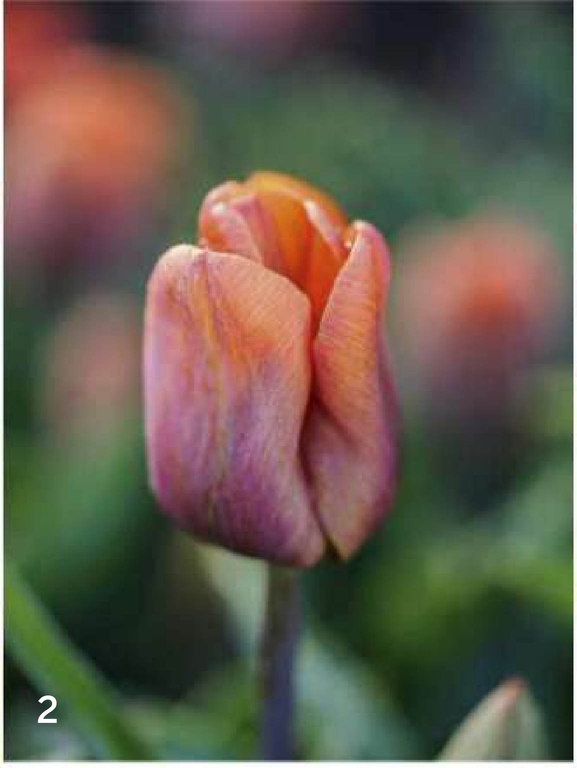
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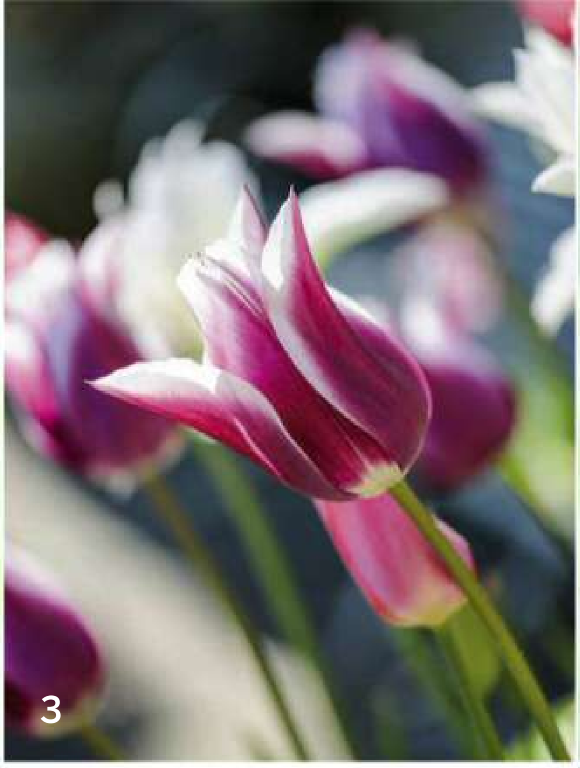
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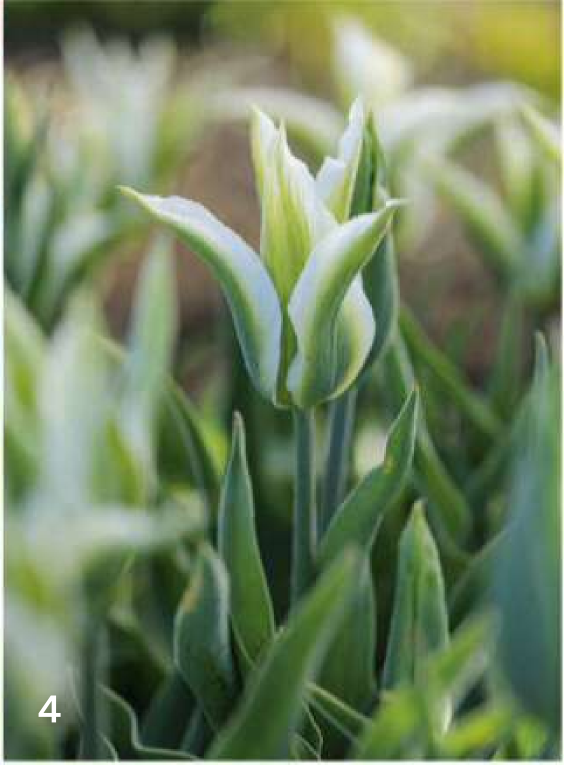
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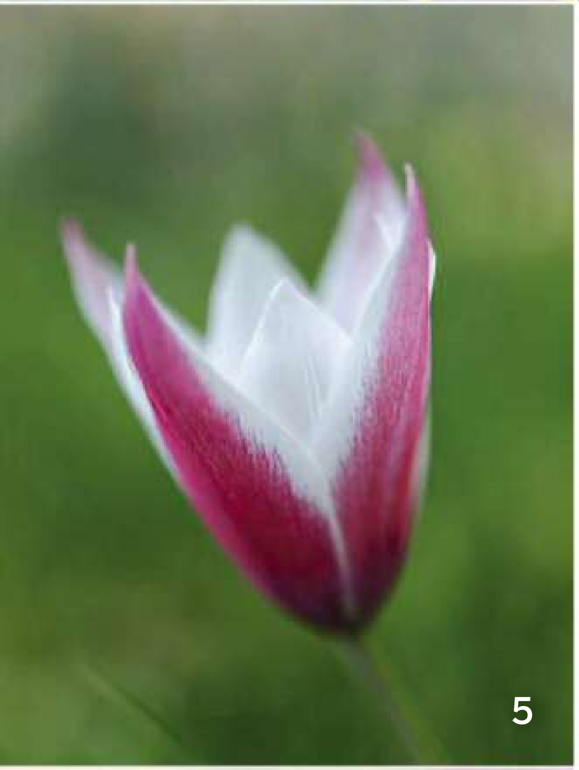
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24 KEY TULIPS

1 *Tulipa* 'Gavota' A mid-season Triumph tulip that flowers in late April and early May. A strong, some might say harsh, combination of brownish red, edged with pale yellow. Inside, the flower is all yellow. 50cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b[†].

2 *Tulipa* 'Cairo' A Triumph tulip that is a lovely soft sandy brown, and which gets browner as it ages. Broad, squareish petals make a flat-topped flower. An exceptional tulip and scented as well. Flowers mid April to early May. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

3 *Tulipa* 'Ballade' Has the sharply reflexed petals typical of Lily-Flowered tulips. They open into a wide, shallow flower, deep pink, edged with white. Inside, a surprising turquoise basal blotch on a white background. 55cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

4 *Tulipa* 'Greenstar' Imagine the popular green and white tulip 'Spring Green' reborn as a Lily-Flowered tulip and you have 'Greenstar'. It flowers between late April and early May. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

5 *Tulipa clusiana* The lady tulip was one of the first wild tulips to come into Europe. Crimson-washed outer petals are pure-white inside, stained by a basal blotch of deep purple. Flowers in April. 25cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

6 *Tulipa* 'Carnaval de Rio' A striking bi-coloured Triumph bloom, that is well suited to its name, with brilliant red feathering on a white ground. It flowers in late April and May. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

7 *Tulipa* 'Ronaldo' The beauty of this Triumph tulip lies in the complex, greyish bloom on the outside of the huge, rounded deep crimson petals. It makes a handsome, squareish flower that blooms in mid-April. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Tulipa* 'Ballerina' Sometimes, form in tulips is sacrificed in pursuit of size. Not so with the elegant 'Ballerina', which is sweetly scented and flowers in sunset shades of orange and red, netted together in an indistinguishable way. 55cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

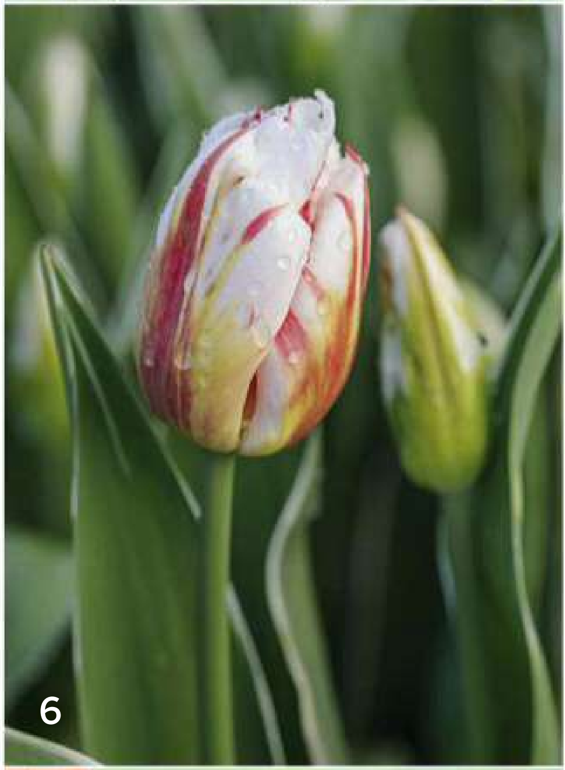
9 *Tulipa saxatilis* Bakeri Group 'Lilac Wonder' Some beautiful small cultivars have been selected from wild species tulips. This one with its arresting combination of pink and bright yellow, flowers from April to May. 25cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

10 *Tulipa* 'Flaming Spring Green' This viridiflora type is a mutation of the popular 'Spring Green'. But rather than just green feathering, the creamy-white petals also include flares of red. A late-season option, flowering in May. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

11 *Tulipa* 'Request' Like so many other orange tulips, 'Request' is scented, which is a great bonus in a tulip. The warm orange of the strongly reflexed petals has a clear tongue of pink overlaid on the outside. Flowers April. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

12 *Tulipa* 'Black Hero' Among the best of the Double Late tulips, because, although it is tall, it has a stem strong enough to bear its cargo. A sport of the famous *T.* 'Queen of Night'. Flowers April to May. 60cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

Turn to page 46 for more key tulips from Belcombe Court.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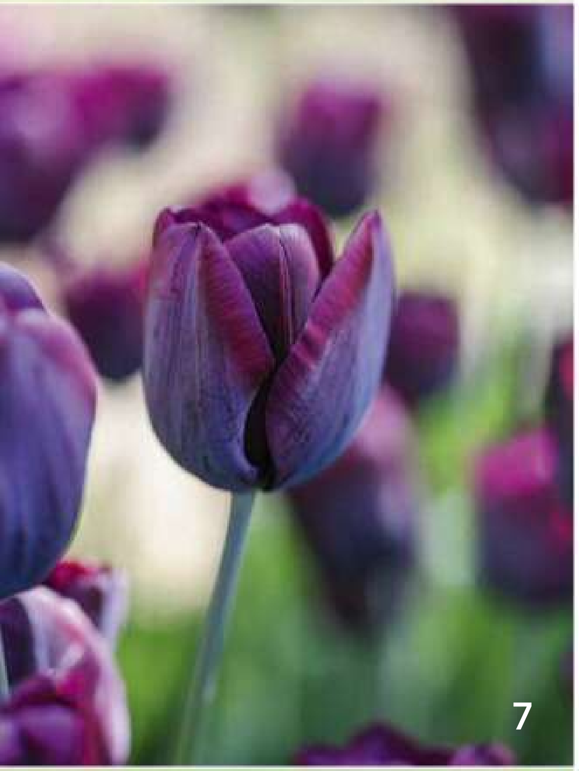
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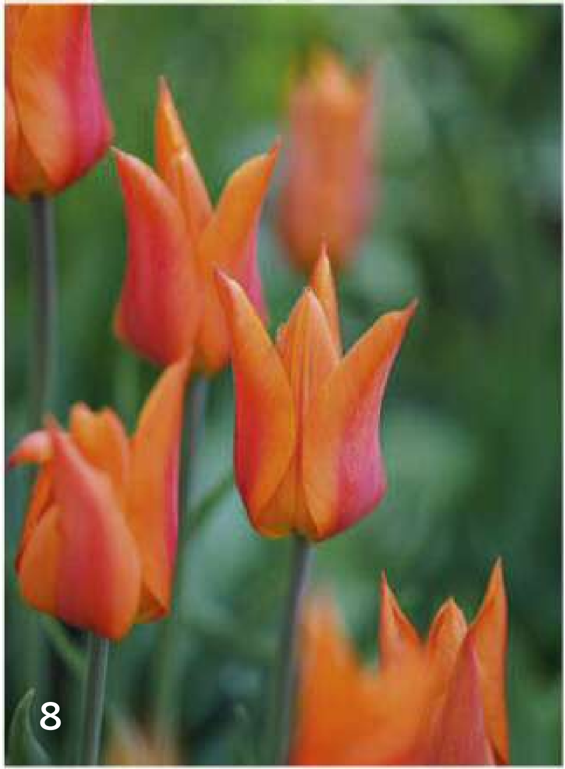
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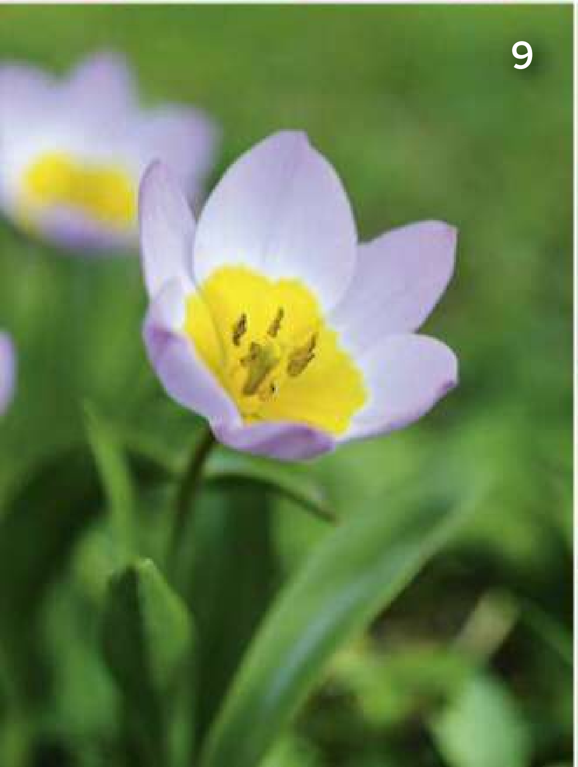
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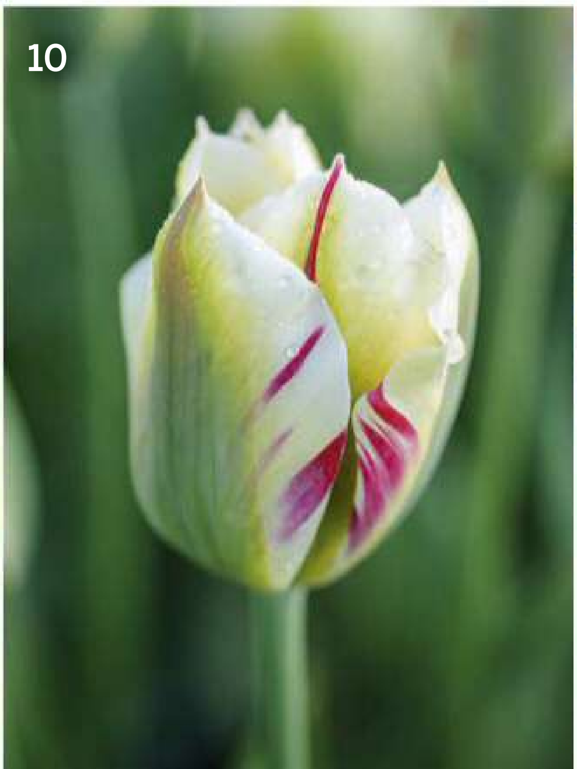
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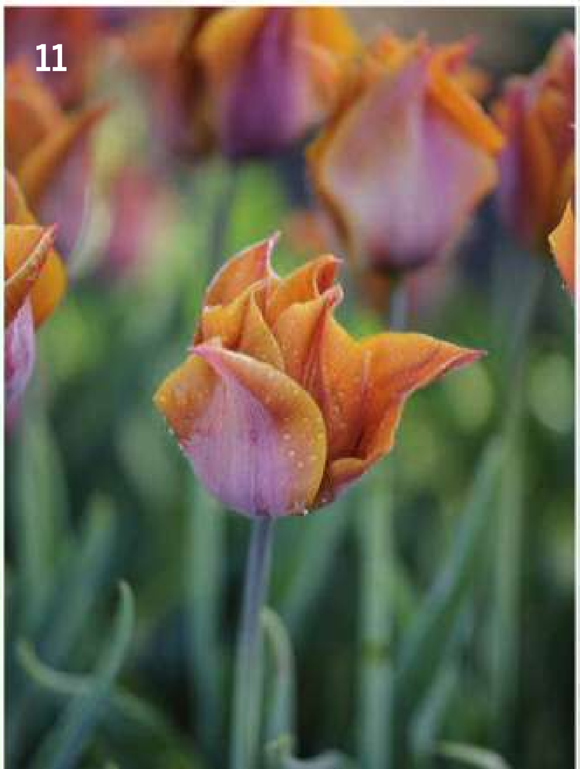
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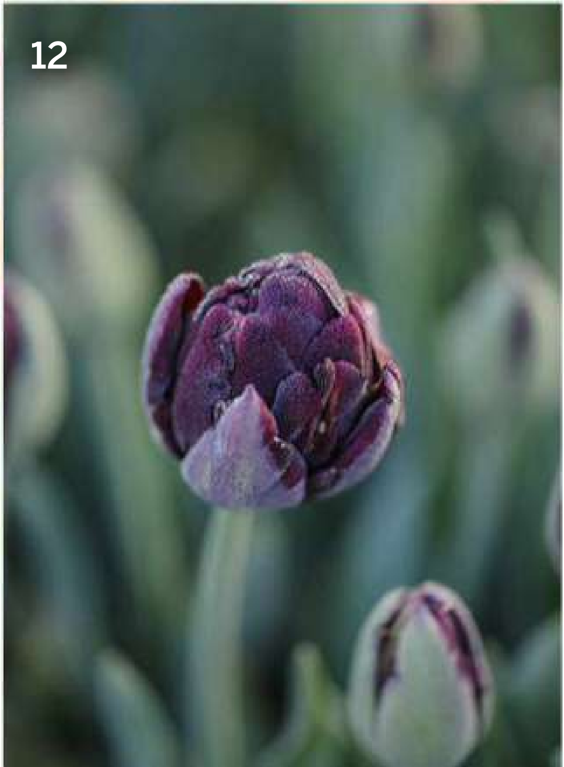
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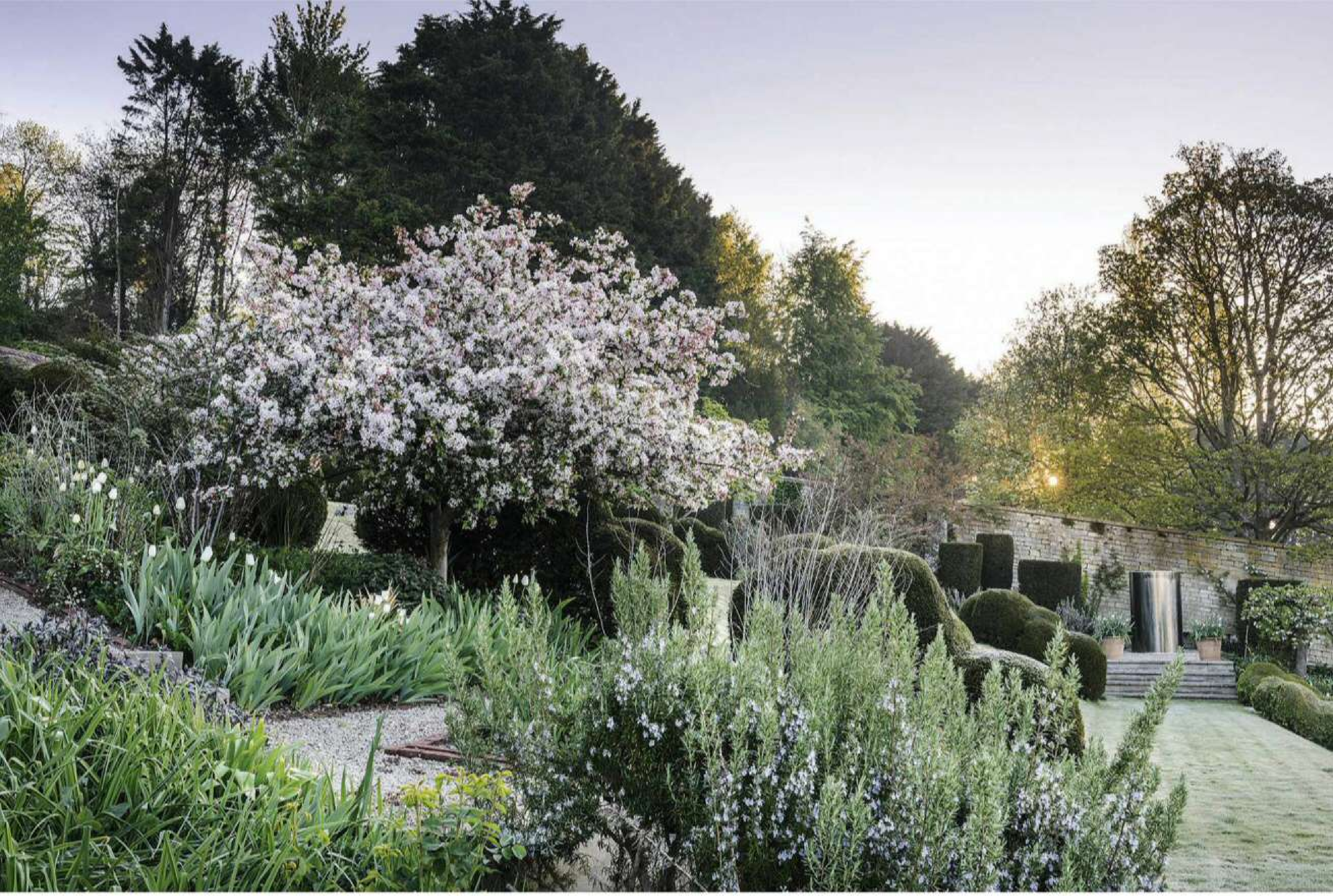


Above The walled garden, designed by Arne Maynard, is dominated by huge mounds of clipped box and yew. A crab apple brings early bloom alongside one of the gravelled paths that run down each side of the garden. Borders here are planted with masses of rosemary and iris with a sprinkle of tulips for spring.

▷ and alliums. Wisterias are trained out either side of the wide door that leads out on to a central terrace between the flower borders.

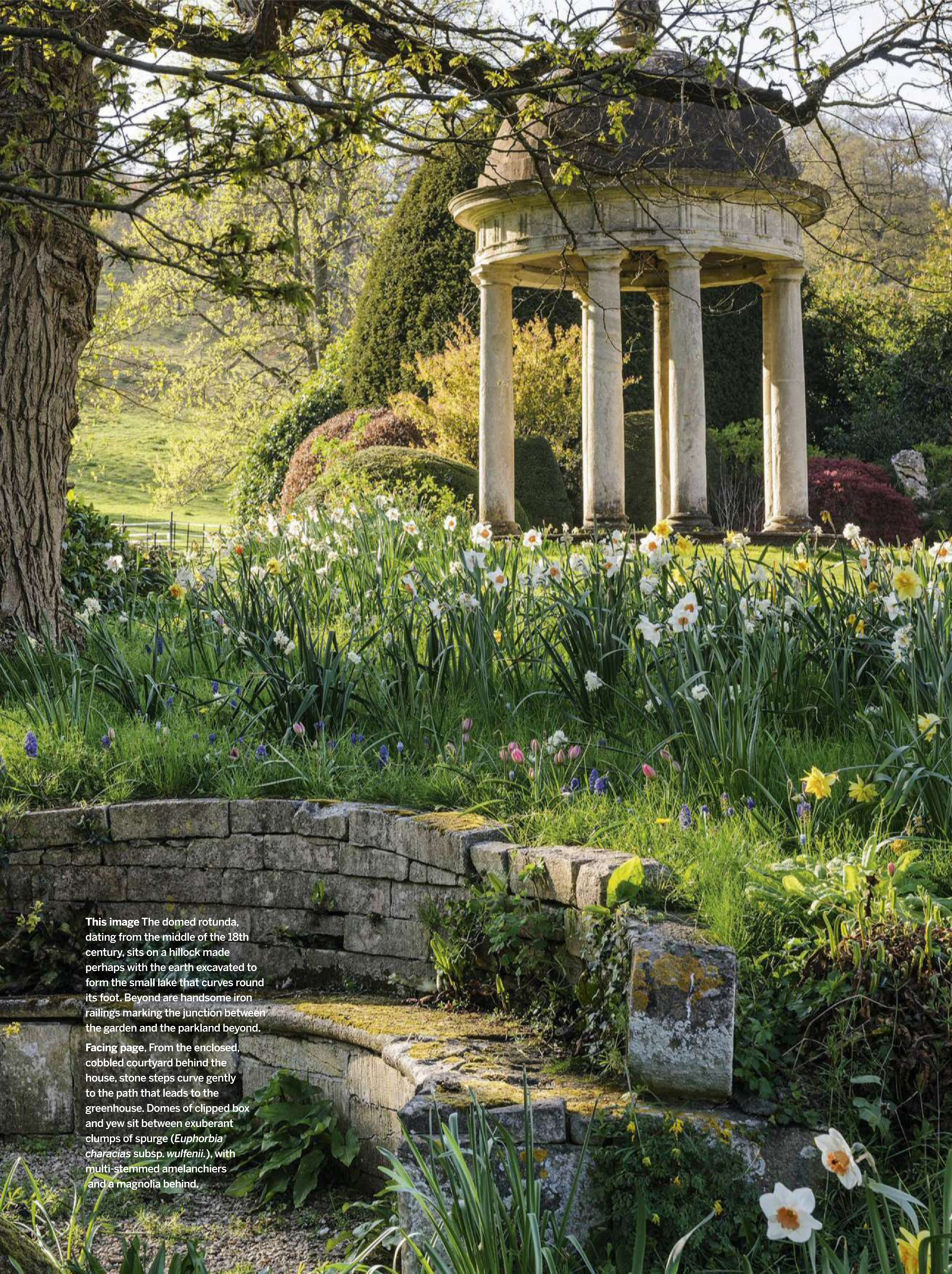
Across the lawn is one of the features that make Belcombe such an intriguing, entrancing place. You see it as soon as you swing into the drive, a tall, rather jagged folly, built of tufa, with a waterfall on its left side, falling into a narrow, curved lake at its foot. Getting the waterfall to work again has been one of Paul's most recent projects and, it seems, the one he is most proud of. The grotto, thought to be Regency, is still in superb condition and creeping into the passage that curves through the inside, you can just make out, in the deliciously moody gloom, pieces of stalactite built into the walls, alongside crystals encased in their original bedrock. It is fantastic, the floor paved with ammonites the size of dinner plates from the collection of John William Yerbury, who died in 1824. The Yerburys were at Belcombe for more than 100 years.

The little lake curls round the bottom of a hillock topped by another arresting feature, a round-topped temple, which seems to have been part of the early improvements carried out by the clothier Henry Yerbury. He was the man who in 1734, commissioned Wood's façade, paid for with the proceeds of a patent for a fine woollen cloth 'for the summer season at home and warmer climates abroad'. Beyond that, close to the southern boundary, is a beech-hedged enclosure, laid out by garden designer Rupert Golby with borders of standard wisterias and hydrangeas leading to a pretty little octagonal summerhouse.

This Arcadian landscape of grotto, waterfall, lake and temple (with a tiny Gothic cottage beyond in the park) makes you think of grand gardens such as Stourhead and Stowe. But the grandness here is miniature, clustered in a small space right in front of the house. That is what makes Belcombe so unusual. And so intriguing. Paul Weiland's great gift to this picturesque miracle has been to get the waterfall flowing into the lake again, from a spring higher up the slope. "The excitement for me was that it was all natural. There's no pump involved. We've just guided nature," he says. Several year's worth of work are glossed over in that "just".

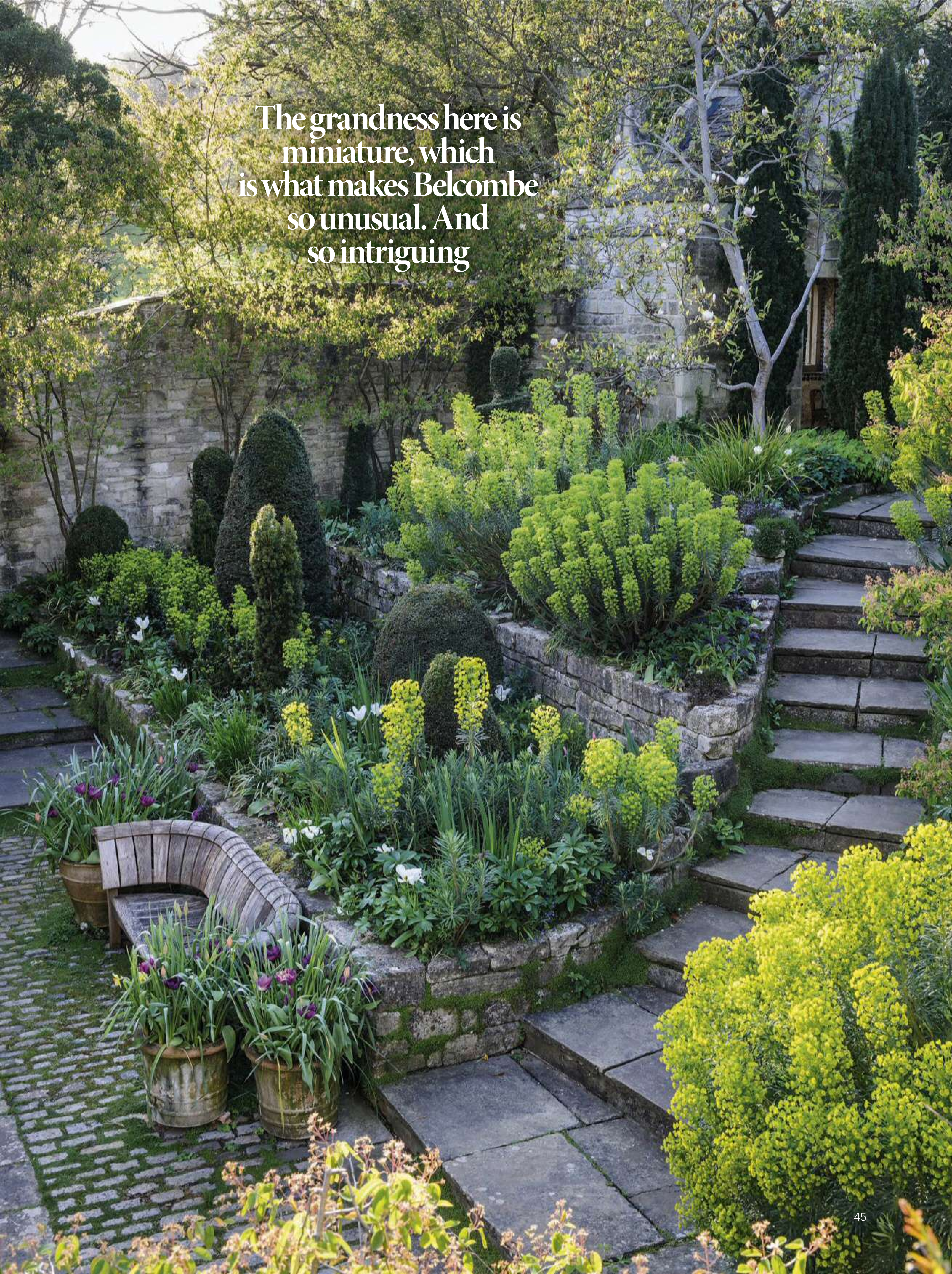
Behind the house, on a steep south-facing slope, is the old walled kitchen garden. This gave the Weilands the ideal opportunity to make a contemporary garden, contained and set apart ▷

To continue turn to page 47

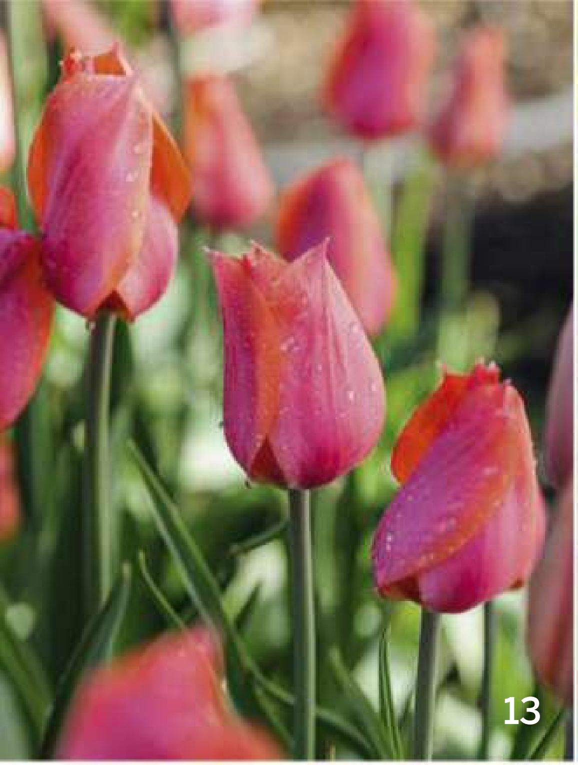


This image The domed rotunda, dating from the middle of the 18th century, sits on a hillock made perhaps with the earth excavated to form the small lake that curves round its foot. Beyond are handsome iron railings marking the junction between the garden and the parkland beyond.

Facing page, From the enclosed, cobbled courtyard behind the house, stone steps curve gently to the path that leads to the greenhouse. Domes of clipped box and yew sit between exuberant clumps of spurge (*Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii.*), with multi-stemmed amelanchiers and a magnolia behind.



The grandness here is miniature, which is what makes Belcombe so unusual. And so intriguing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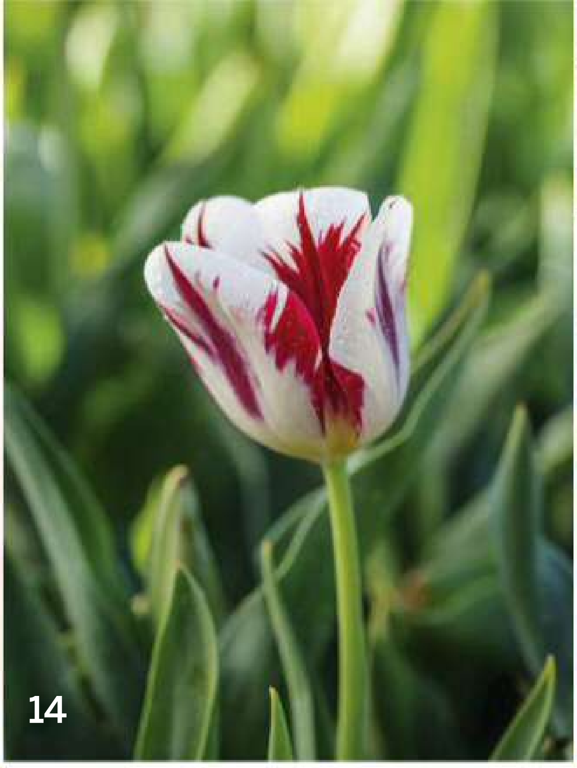
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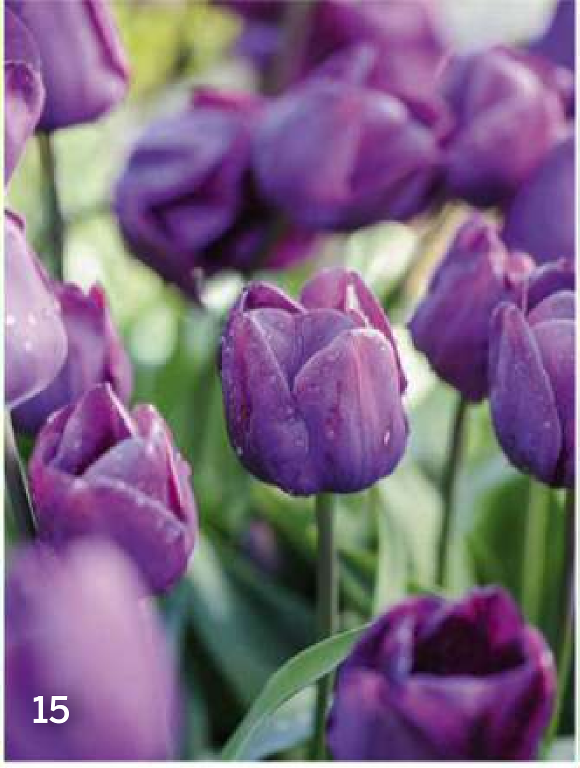
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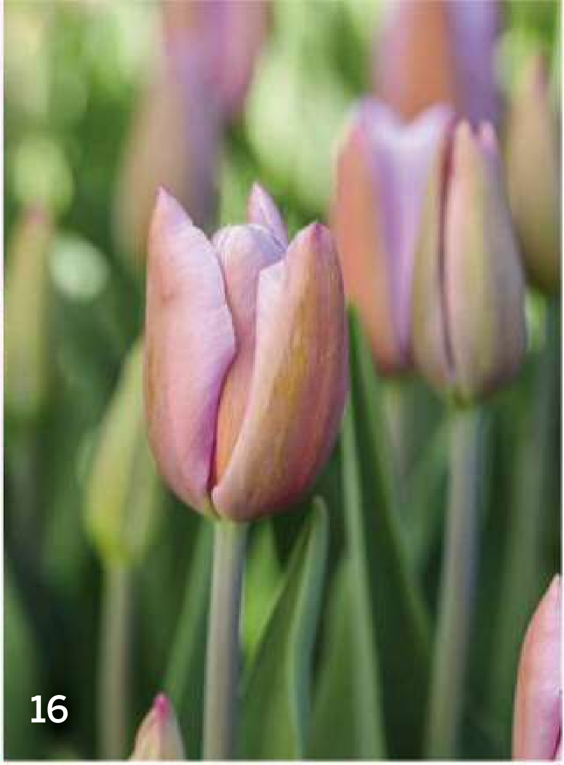
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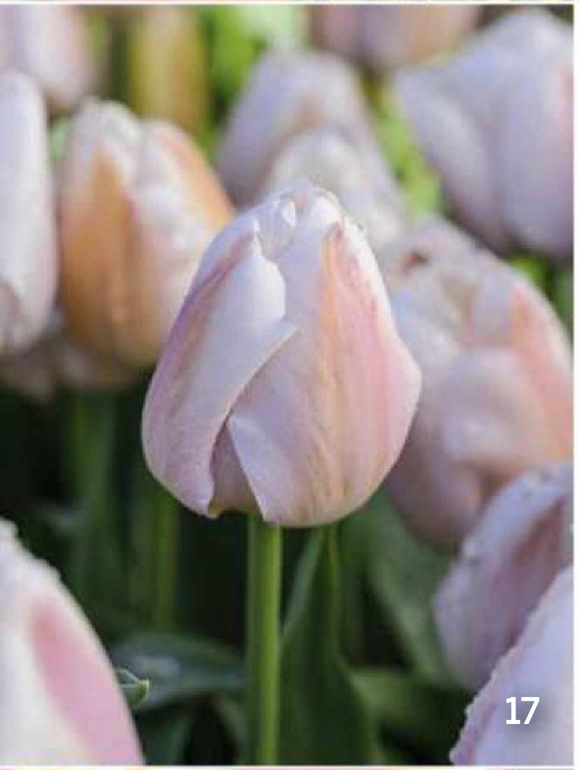
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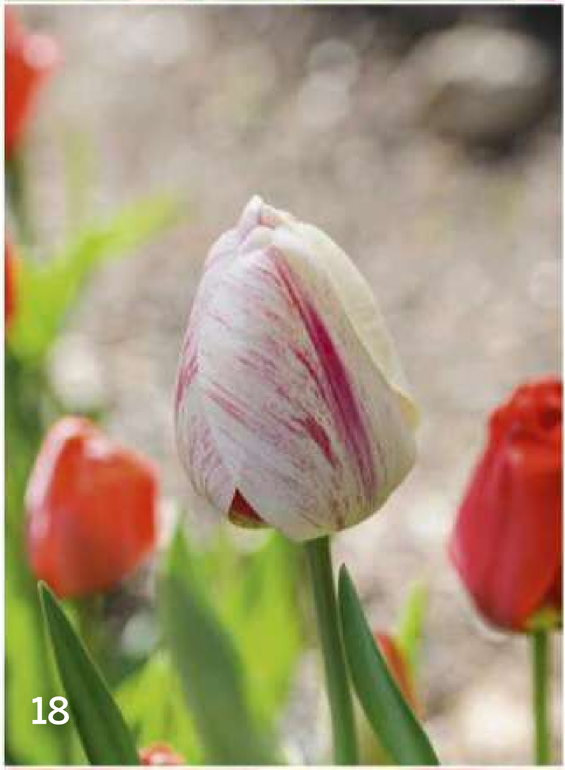
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24 KEY TULIPS CONTINUED

13 *Tulipa* 'Temple of Beauty' A tulip of great poise, with sharply pointed orange petals flushed up the centre with deep pink. A descendant of the old Cottage Group tulips, known for their staying power. Flowers April to May. 60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

14 *Tulipa* 'Raspberry Ripple' An uncompromising combination of deep red, flamed and flared, on a white ground. Makes a strong, square-bottomed flower. An eye-catching cut flower that blooms in April. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

15 *Tulipa* 'Negrita' Excellent in pots as it grows to only 45cm with purple flowers, veined with seams of an even darker purple. At the base of each petal, a surprising clear blue blotch. Flowers mid April. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

16 *Tulipa* 'Mistress Mystic' A very prettily shaped tulip, the petals curving out slightly at the top. Complex shades of violet, veined over a very pale pink. Flowers late April. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

17 *Tulipa* 'Apricot Pride' A Darwin Hybrid tulip with the huge, square-shouldered blooms typical of that group. A soft colour, easy to use and lovely to pick. Flowers late April. 45cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

18 *Tulipa* 'Burning Heart' Huge flowers, variable in their markings. Some are pale cream, streaked with red, others are flushed all over with red. Inner petals are more strongly marked than outer. Flowers April to May. 55cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

19 *Tulipa* 'Abu Hassan' Flowers of deep mahogany red, with an edge of deep gold around the top of the petals. It never opens up to show the inside. Flowers in early May. 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

20 *Tulipa* 'Slawa' A handsome and dramatic tulip, with a tall, slightly waisted flower. The petals are almost striped, deep purple in the centre, with a band of deep pink on either side. Flowers early April. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

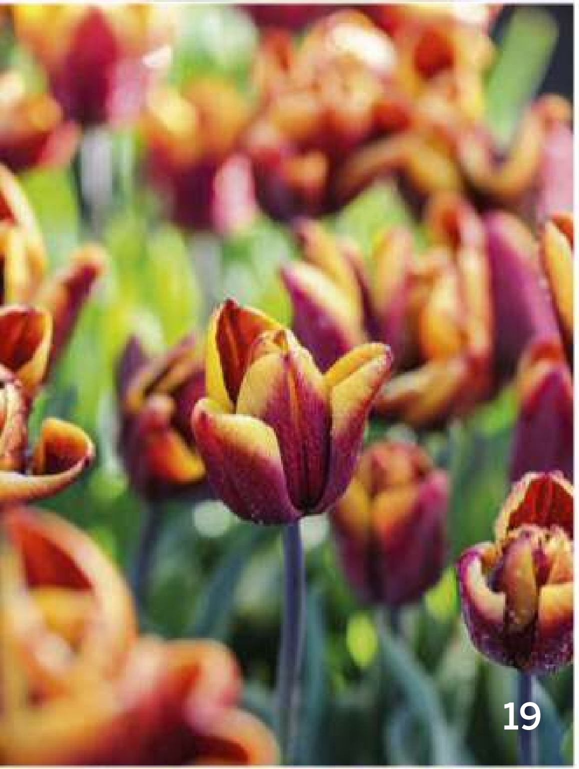
21 *Tulipa* 'Grand Perfection' An attempt to get close to the Rembrandt tulips of Dutch Old Master paintings, with broad flashes of red spreading over a creamy background. Flowers in late April. 45cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

22 *Tulipa* 'Red Dress' An unusually shaped tulip, now part of a new category, the Coronet group. The petals are of a stiff, thick texture, twisting in several directions before gathering in a crown. Flowers mid to late spring. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

23 *Tulipa* 'Merlot' A tall, elegant tulip of the Lily-Flowered type, with petals that reflex slightly at their tips. Classically formed – a tulip of great poise. Flowers in late April. 65cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

24 *Tulipa* 'Estella Rijnveld' One of the best of the Parrot tulips, the petals exuberantly ruffled in red and white. Raised in the Netherlands in 1954 by Dr de Mol and named after his wife. Flowers in May. 55cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.**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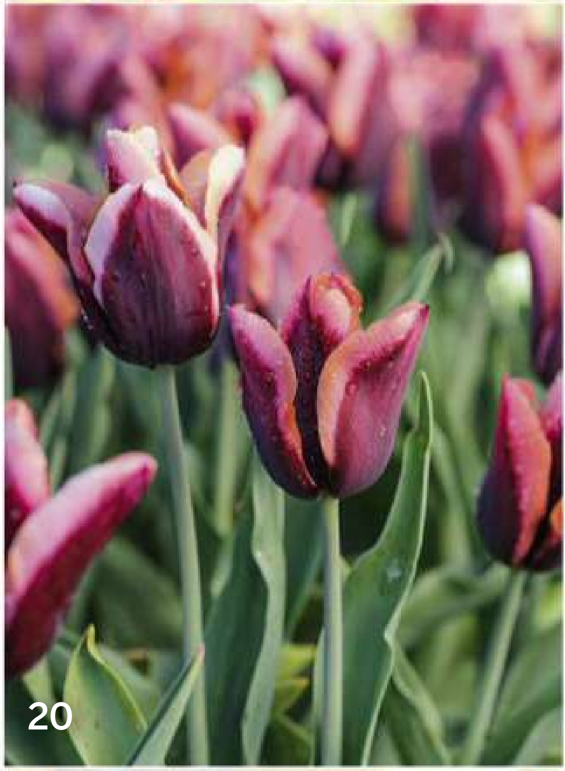
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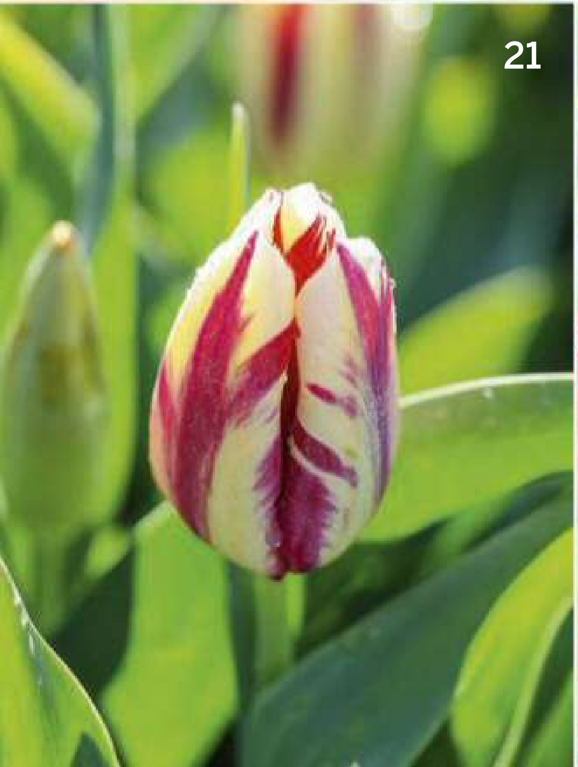
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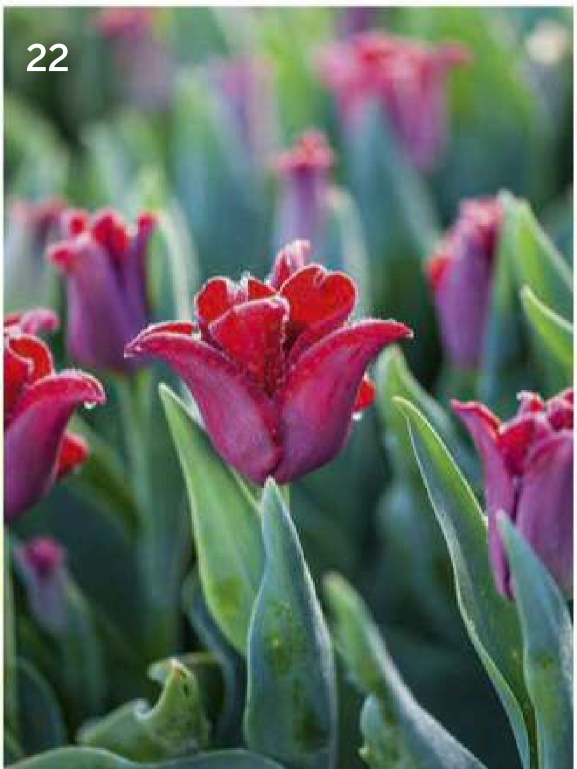
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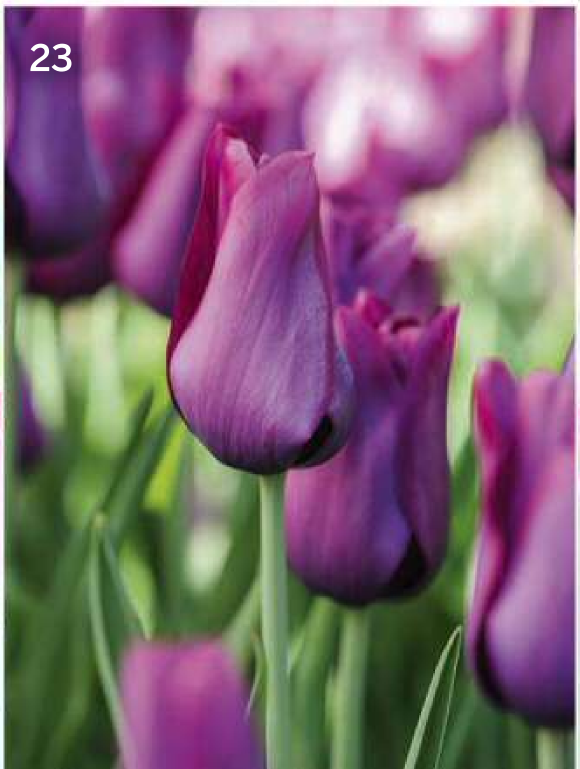
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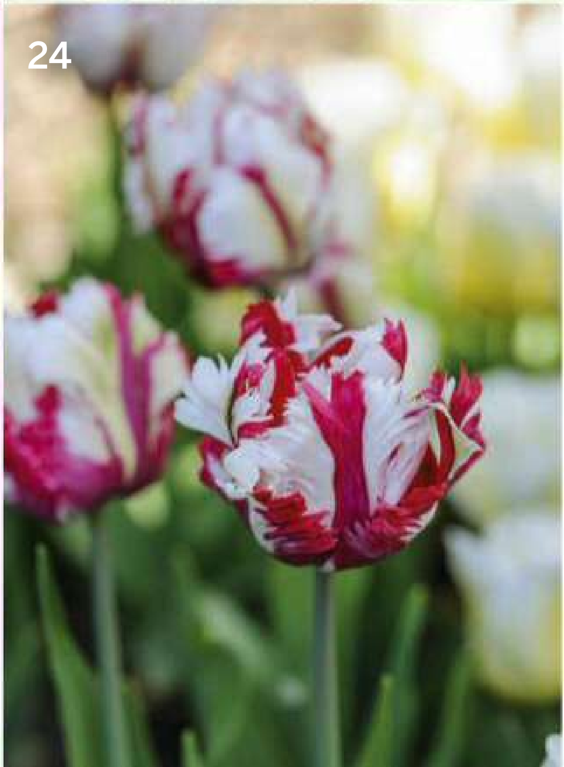
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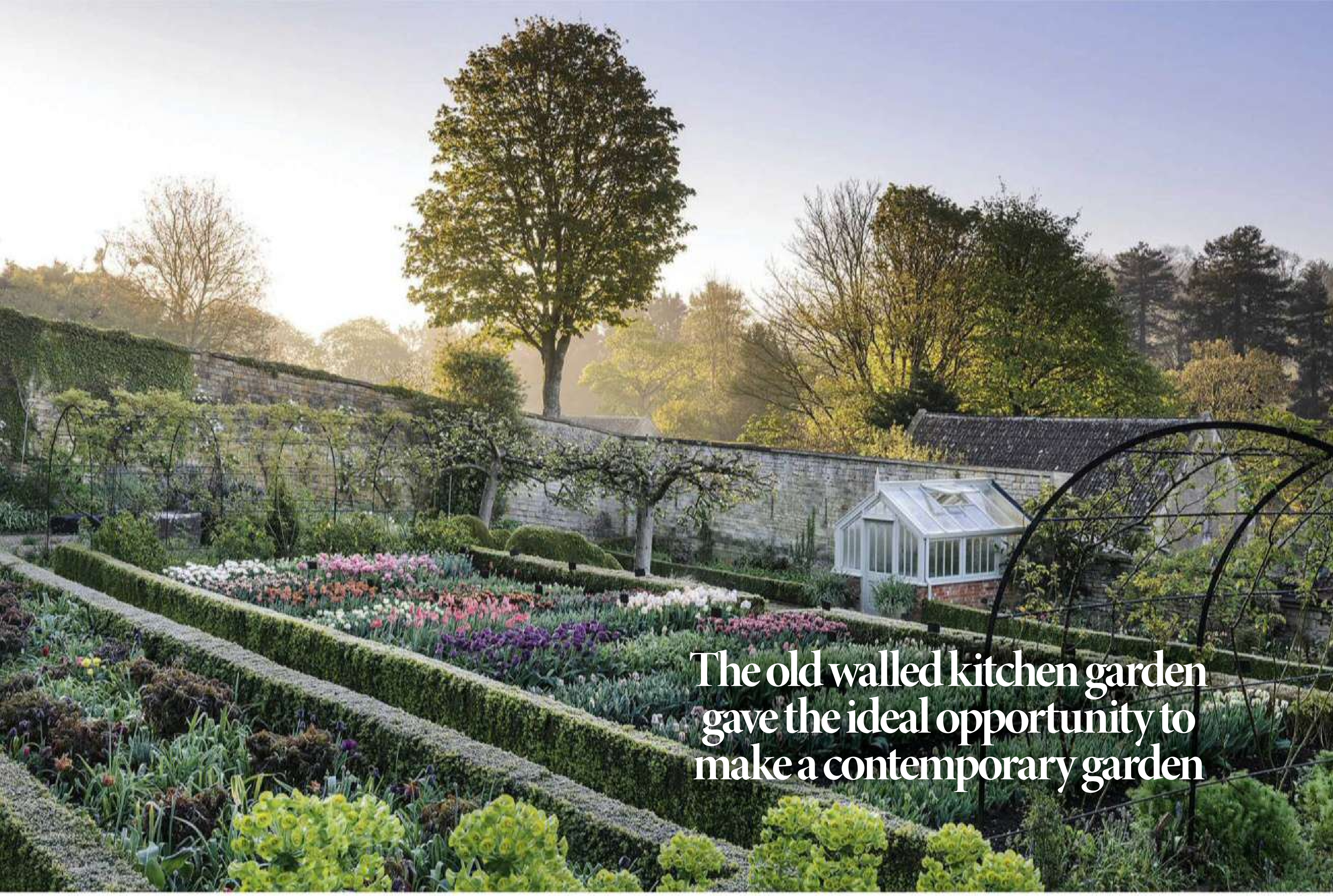


The old walled kitchen garden gave the ideal opportunity to make a contemporary garden

from Belcombe's remarkable 18th-century landscape. They started with a Mediterranean theme: a long, red-tiled loggia against the wall at the top of the garden, with a swimming pool in front. Groves of olive trees were planted to reinforce the Mediterranean theme. But the olives didn't like it and the slope remained very steep.

At this stage the Weilands called in Arne Maynard to reconfigure the space. He boxed and coaxed the slope into wide grassy terraces, which fall in parallel lines down the centre. Either side, gravelled paths wind down between sets of stone steps to a pair of long, box-edged beds at the bottom, which the Weilands' head gardener, Sue Cranch, uses as cutting gardens, filled in spring with thousands of tulips. Grassy borders of *Stipa tenuissima* follow the steps down the sides of the kitchen garden with masses of rosemary and a lovely crab apple at the top, its crown filled with a clump of mistletoe.

The final delight, in a garden of overwhelming pleasure is the new greenhouse that you enter by way of the walled garden. The old glasshouses inside the kitchen garden were demolished and this long new one built as a lean-to on the outside, facing south. It is packed with potted hippeastrums and hyacinths for the house, alongside trays of seedlings just emerging to fatten up the herbaceous borders.

Steep steps lead from the greenhouse down to a series of courtyards on the north side of the house. Ground level still seems quite a long way down, but the slopes in between are filled with enthusiastic great clumps of spurge (*Euphorbia characias* subsp. *wulfenii*), the oak-leaved hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) and amelanchier. Against the wall is Paul's much Instagrammed plant stand, filled with alpines in clay pots.

It was a lucky day that brought the Weilands to Belcombe Court. Paul has brought in many wonderful trees – parrotias, holm oaks, acers. He's made the Belcombe Brook run again, gurgling fast on its grassy course from woodland to grotto and, while respecting the old, given the garden another layer to add to its history. "Yes," he says. "We've given a lot to the place, but it has given even more to us."

Above Gravel paths lead down the sloping walled garden to the lowest level. These long lower terraces, edged by low box hedging and espaliered fruit trees – a hallmark of Arne Maynard's designs – are used for growing cutting flowers for the house, while more tender bulbs for house displays are nurtured in the new glasshouse.

USEFUL INFORMATION

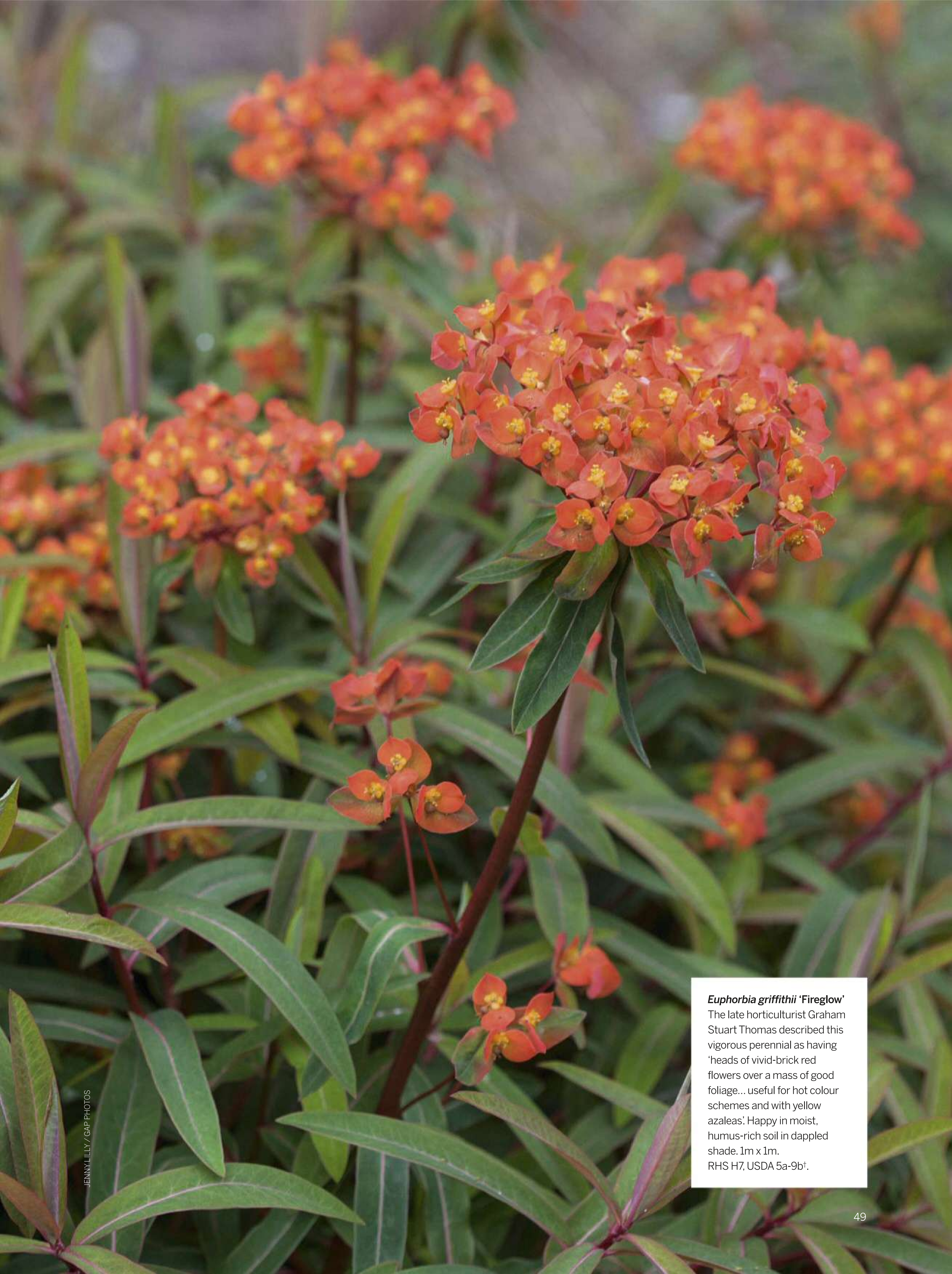
Address Belcombe Court, Belcombe Road, Bradford On Avon, Wiltshire BA15 1LZ. **Web** belcombe.com

Open Open occassionally for charity, see website for details. Belcombe Court will also host this summer's Iford Arts Festival, 21-30 August. Visit ifordarts.org.uk for more information.

EUPHORBIA

This vast and diverse genus brings structure and texture to a mixed planting scheme, and in spring plants also offer attractive flowers in many colours

WORDS MATTHEW BIGGS



Euphorbia griffithii 'Fireglow'
The late horticulturist Graham Stuart Thomas described this vigorous perennial as having 'heads of vivid-brick red flowers over a mass of good foliage… useful for hot colour schemes and with yellow azaleas'. Happy in moist, humus-rich soil in dappled shade. 1m x 1m.
RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b†.

JENNY LILLY / GAP PHOTOS

The genus is one of the most fascinating and diverse of all plant families. It includes almost 8,000 genera – many of them succulents, as well as the poinsettia and *Hevea brasiliensis*, the commercial source of rubber.

As a general rule, euphorbias with green leaves prefer some shade while those with glaucous leaves relish a hot, sunny position in free-draining soil. As spring progresses, the chartreuse flowers of the sun-loving low grower *E. myrsinites* fade to pink, and the serpentine stems and spiralling waxy blue leaves become a focal point. The horticulturist Graham Stuart Thomas was highly enamoured with this plant describing it as a must-have ‘for border fronts, sunny banks and dry walls’. The feathery foliage of *E. cyparissias* ‘Fens Ruby’, which emerges maroon on maroon stems and has lime-green flowerheads, makes it a pleasing, contrasting companion. However, the most outstanding glaucous foliage of all is found in *E.* ‘Blue Haze’, which forms a mound of leaves topped with masses of lime-green inflorescences from early spring to summer. But if blue-grey does not appeal, there are alternatives in variegated *E.* x *martini* ‘Ascot Rainbow’ or deep-purple *E.* Blackbird (= ‘Nothowlee’), whose bright-green spring flowers create an eye-catching contrast with its foliage.

Two large, spring-flowering euphorbias that need sunshine and shelter both for their protection and to optimise their mellifluous scent are *E. mellifera* and *E.* x *pasteurii*. Both make impressive eye-catching specimen plants against steps, walls or in courtyards. *E. mellifera* from Madeira and the Canaries, forms an impressive mound of bright-green leaves and honey-brown flowerheads in late spring, while *E.* x *pasteurii* is a similar but hardier hybrid between *E. mellifera* and *E. stygiana*, (an Azorean endemic). It first appeared at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden in 1998 and was identified by biological sciences undergraduate George Pasteur. The selection *E.* x *pasteurii* ‘John Phillips’, made by the renowned plantsperson John Phillips at his Home Covert Gardens and Arboretum near Devizes, boasts red stems and bright coral foliage in winter and has the same appealing fragrance.

But with euphorbias, you should expect the unexpected. When William Griffith (1810-1845) collected *E. griffithii* in western Bhutan at an altitude of 2,000-2,500m the flowers were described as ‘scarlet or orange red’ – an unusual colour among temperate euphorbias. The species is now represented in gardens by ‘Fireglow’ with bright-scarlet bracts, and by the less vigorous ‘Dixter’ selected by Christopher Lloyd at Washfield Nursery. Both push up from the ground in spring with bright, glossy shoots before bursting into flower. They are inclined to spread in damp, free-draining conditions, but growing them in lighter drier soils curtails such expansionist tendencies. These and the closely related *E. sikkimensis*, the emerging shoots of which are red then pink, with foliage that boasts a carmine-red midrib and smoked red edges, make unusual subjects for woodland gardens. For groundcover in a similar location try *E. amygdaloides* ‘Purpurea’, described by Graham Stuart Thomas as ‘a form of unusual quality… the leaves and stems are purplish-mahogany, contrasting well with the yellowish flowerheads’.

But springtime euphorbias are not just about leaves, bracts and emerging stems. The nectar glands of *E. characias* ‘Black Pearl’ create a distinctive deep-purple ‘eye’ that would delight Picasso and the yellow-green flowers of *E.* ‘Whistleberry Garnet’ are punctuated with spots of clear, bright reddish-brown – a pleasing contrast with the chartreuse-green flowerheads.

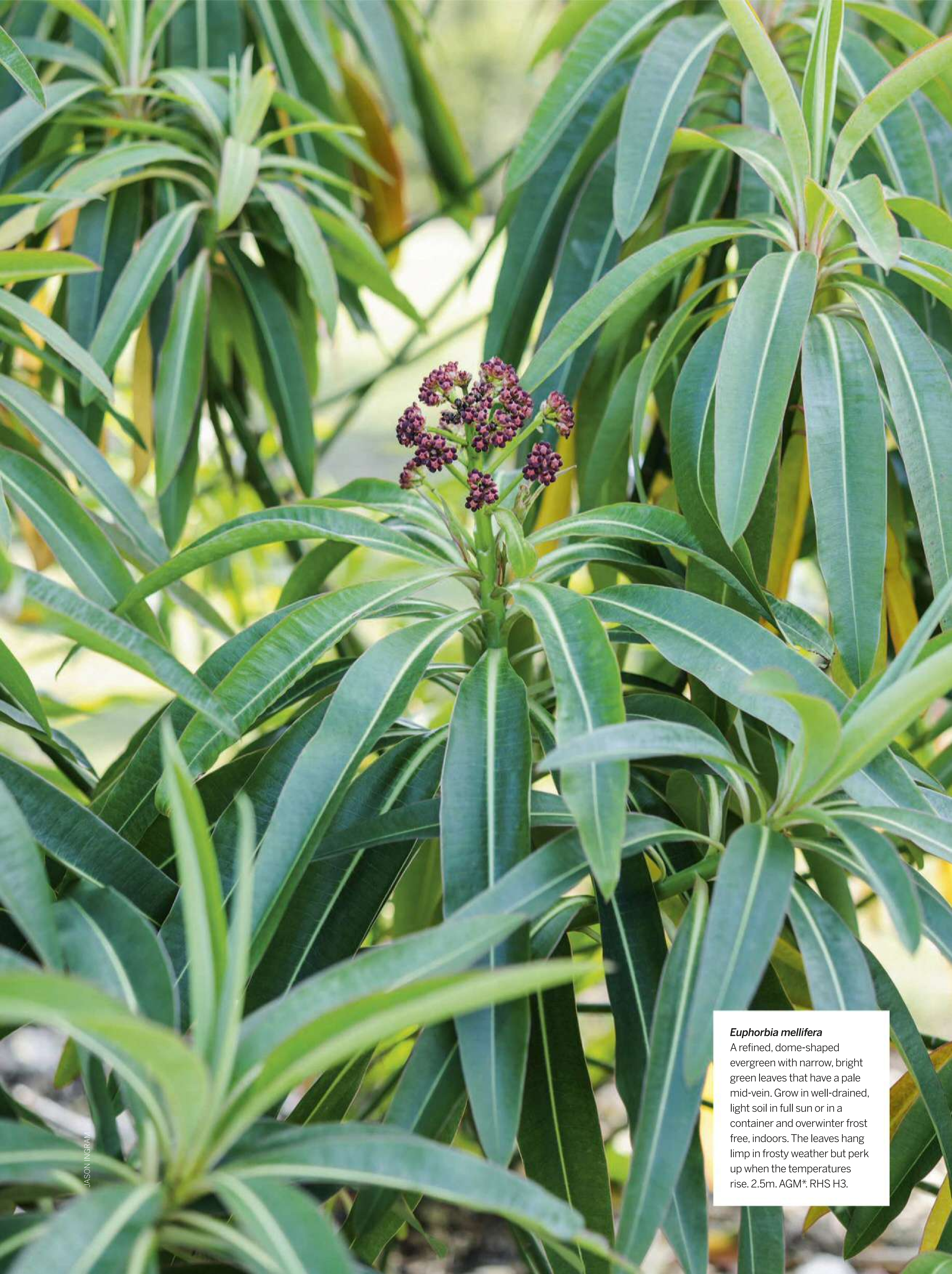
Such an array of springtime form and colour proclaims the genus *Euphorbia* as rich in interest and full of surprises. ❑

• Author Matthew Biggs is a broadcaster and garden writer.
His recommendations for the best early euphorbias can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

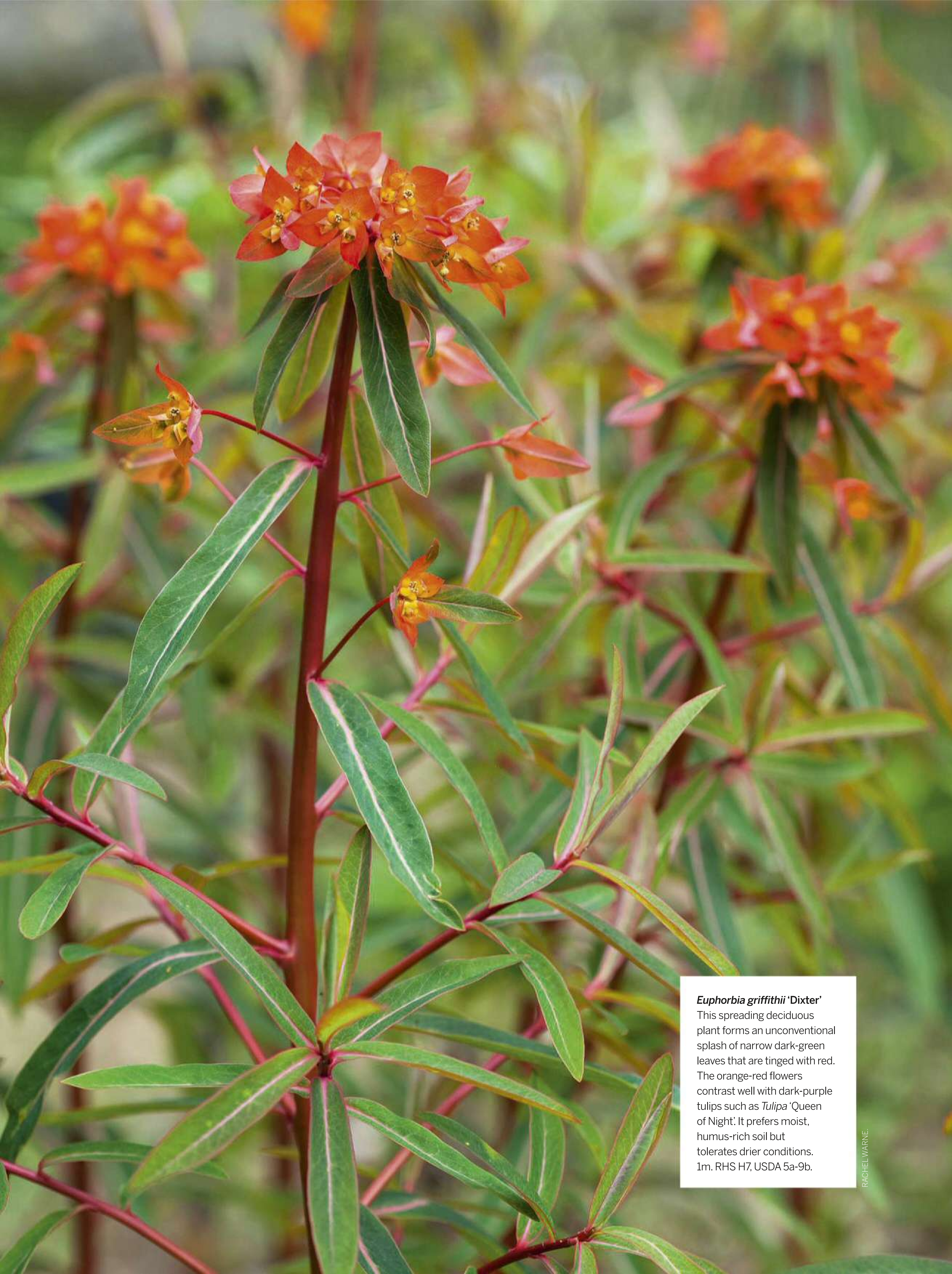
What Euphorbias can be annuals, perennials, shrubs or succulents. Grown for their spring interest from their new growth, stems and inflorescences; for their architectural value over several seasons, and for thier surreal, ‘other worldly’ appearance.
Origins Their natural habitats range from Macaronesia to the Himalayas.
Season Early spring to autumn. Those featured in this profile flower in late spring to early summer.
Size Variable from stiffly upright to prostrate and spreading with a height of between 10cm to 2.5m and a similar spread.
Conditions To be found from Mediterranean scrub to cool temperate woodland in acidic or alkaline soil. This should be reflected in cultivation; some prefer free-draining soil in hot sunshine while others flourish in moist or dry shade.
Hardiness Depending on species, their hardiness varies from RHS H3 to RHS H7, and from USDA 6a to 11.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.



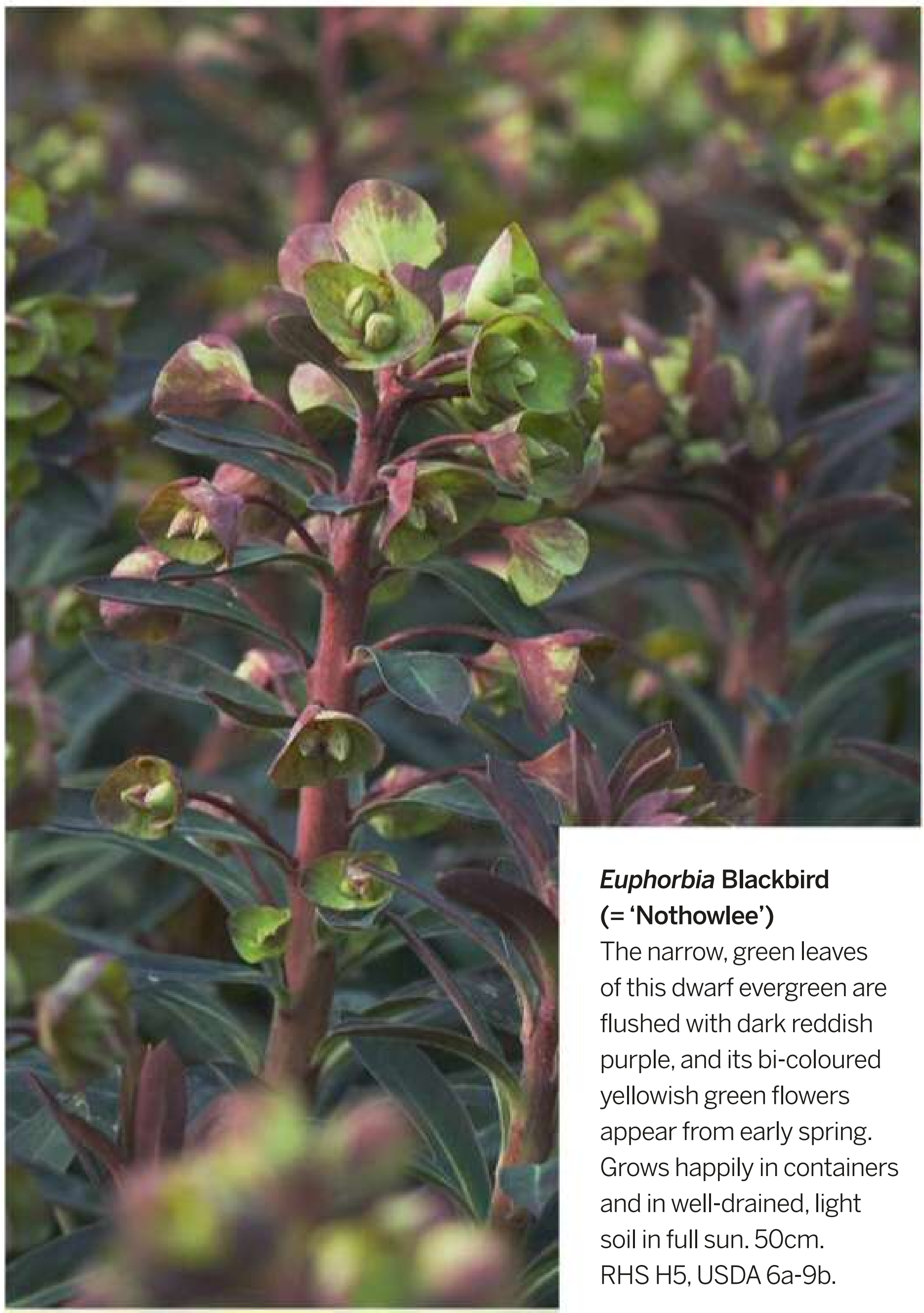
Euphorbia mellifera
A refined, dome-shaped evergreen with narrow, bright green leaves that have a pale mid-vein. Grow in well-drained, light soil in full sun or in a container and overwinter frost free, indoors. The leaves hang limp in frosty weather but perk up when the temperatures rise. 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H3.

JASON INGRAM

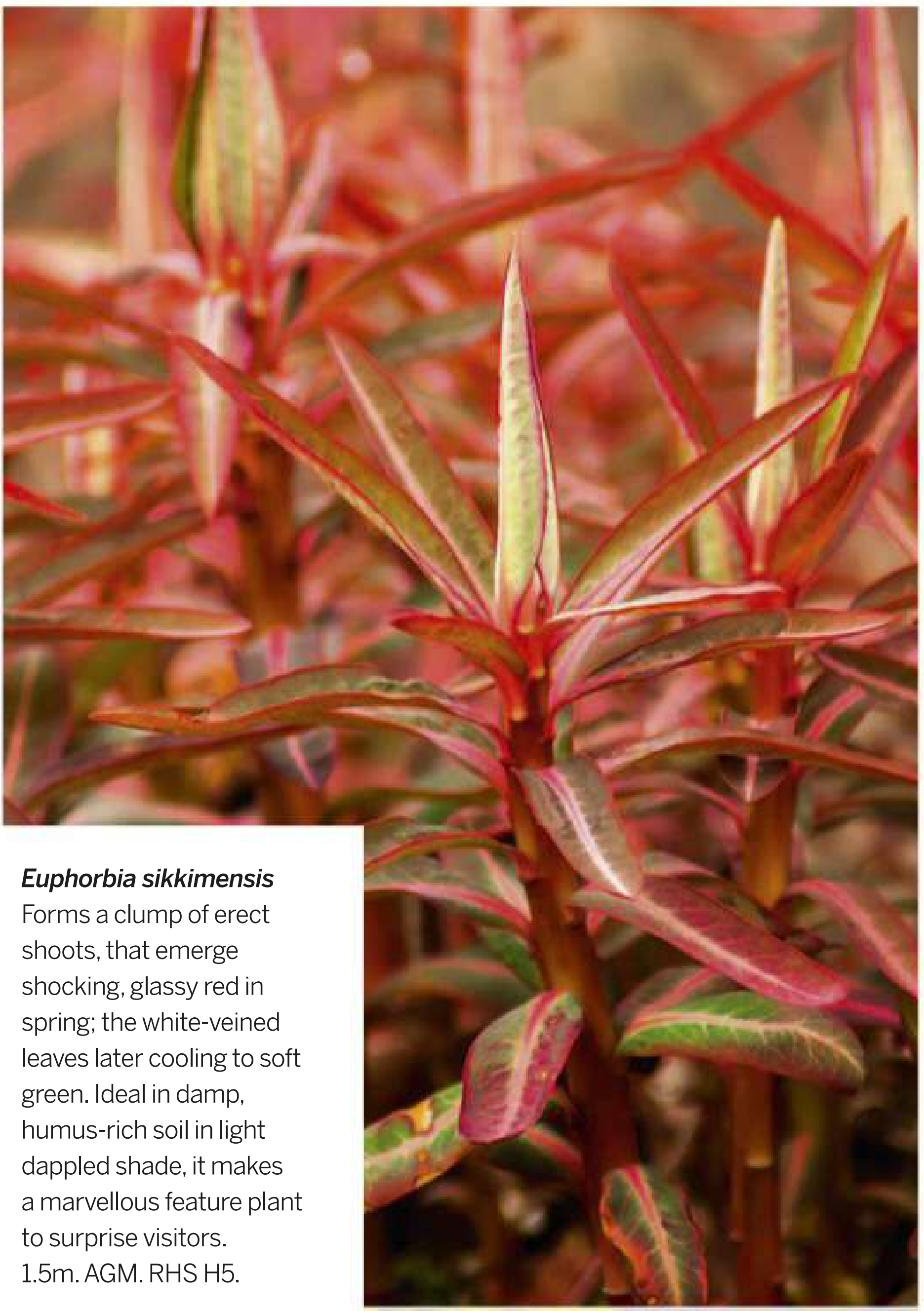


***Euphorbia griffithii* 'Dixter'**
This spreading deciduous plant forms an unconventional splash of narrow dark-green leaves that are tinged with red. The orange-red flowers contrast well with dark-purple tulips such as *Tulipa* 'Queen of Night'. It prefers moist, humus-rich soil but tolerates drier conditions. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.

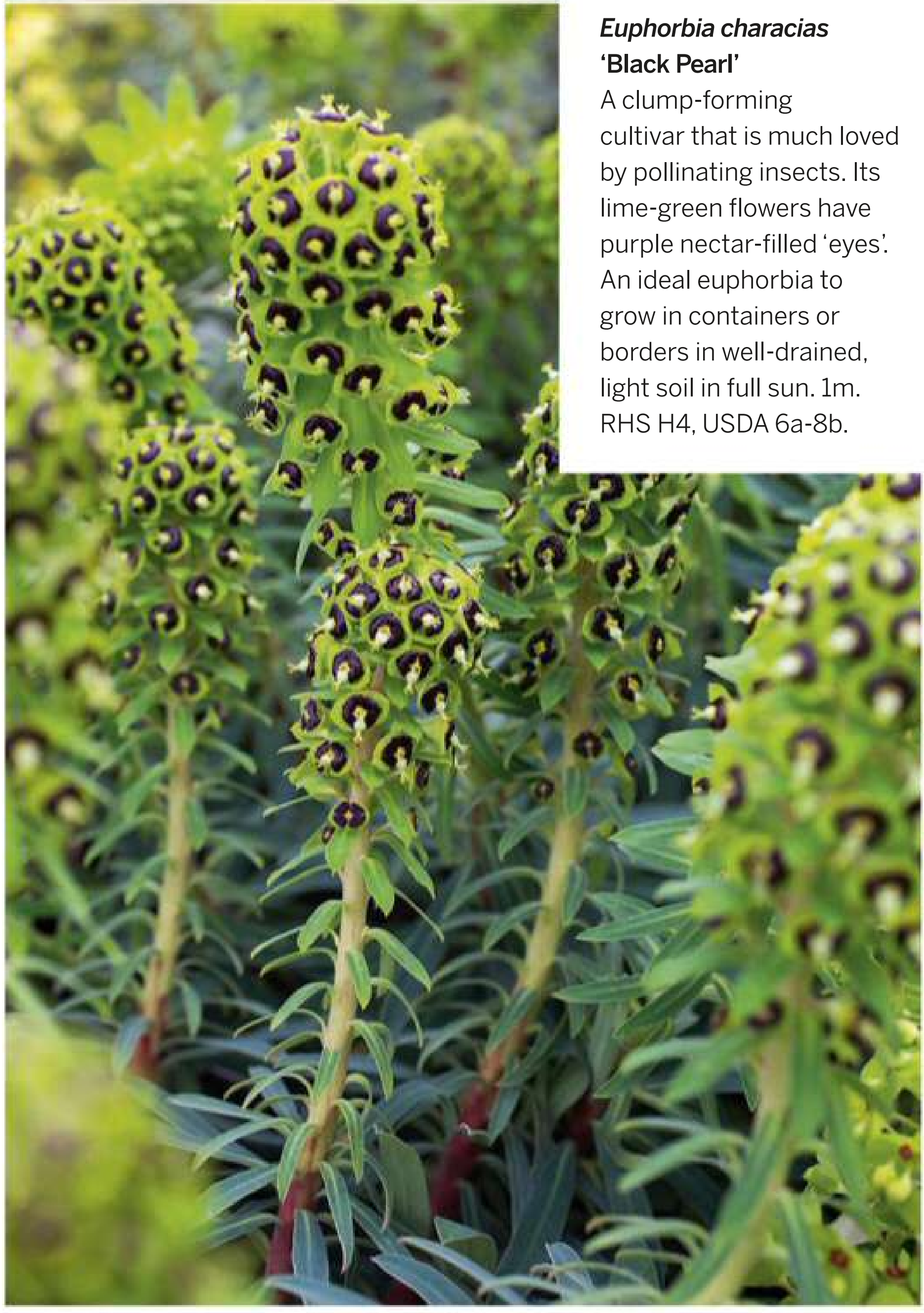
RACHEL WARNE



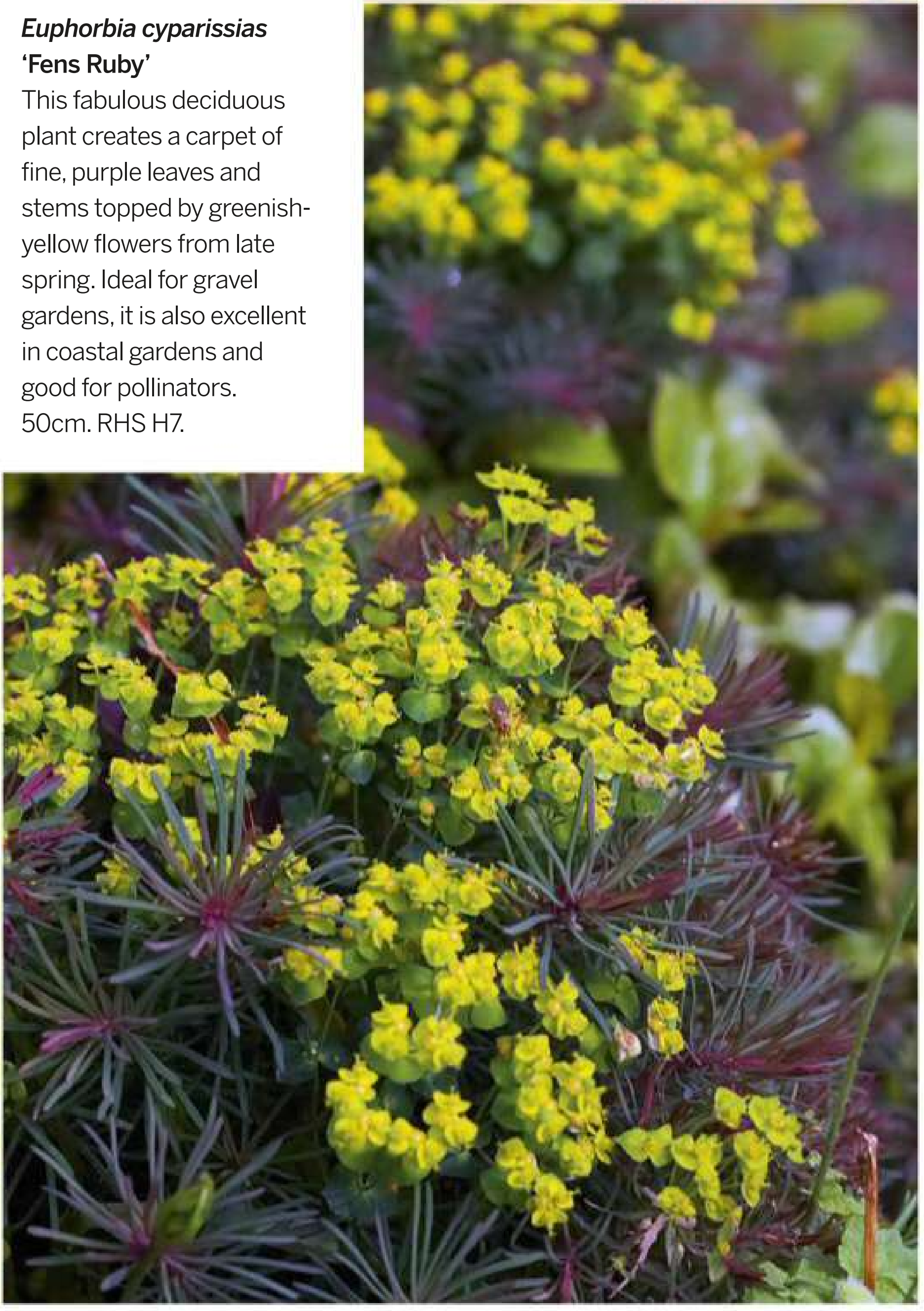
Euphorbia Blackbird (= 'Nothowlee')
The narrow, green leaves of this dwarf evergreen are flushed with dark reddish purple, and its bi-coloured yellowish green flowers appear from early spring. Grows happily in containers and in well-drained, light soil in full sun. 50cm. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.



Euphorbia sikkimensis
Forms a clump of erect shoots, that emerge shocking, glassy red in spring; the white-veined leaves later cooling to soft green. Ideal in damp, humus-rich soil in light dappled shade, it makes a marvellous feature plant to surprise visitors. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H5.

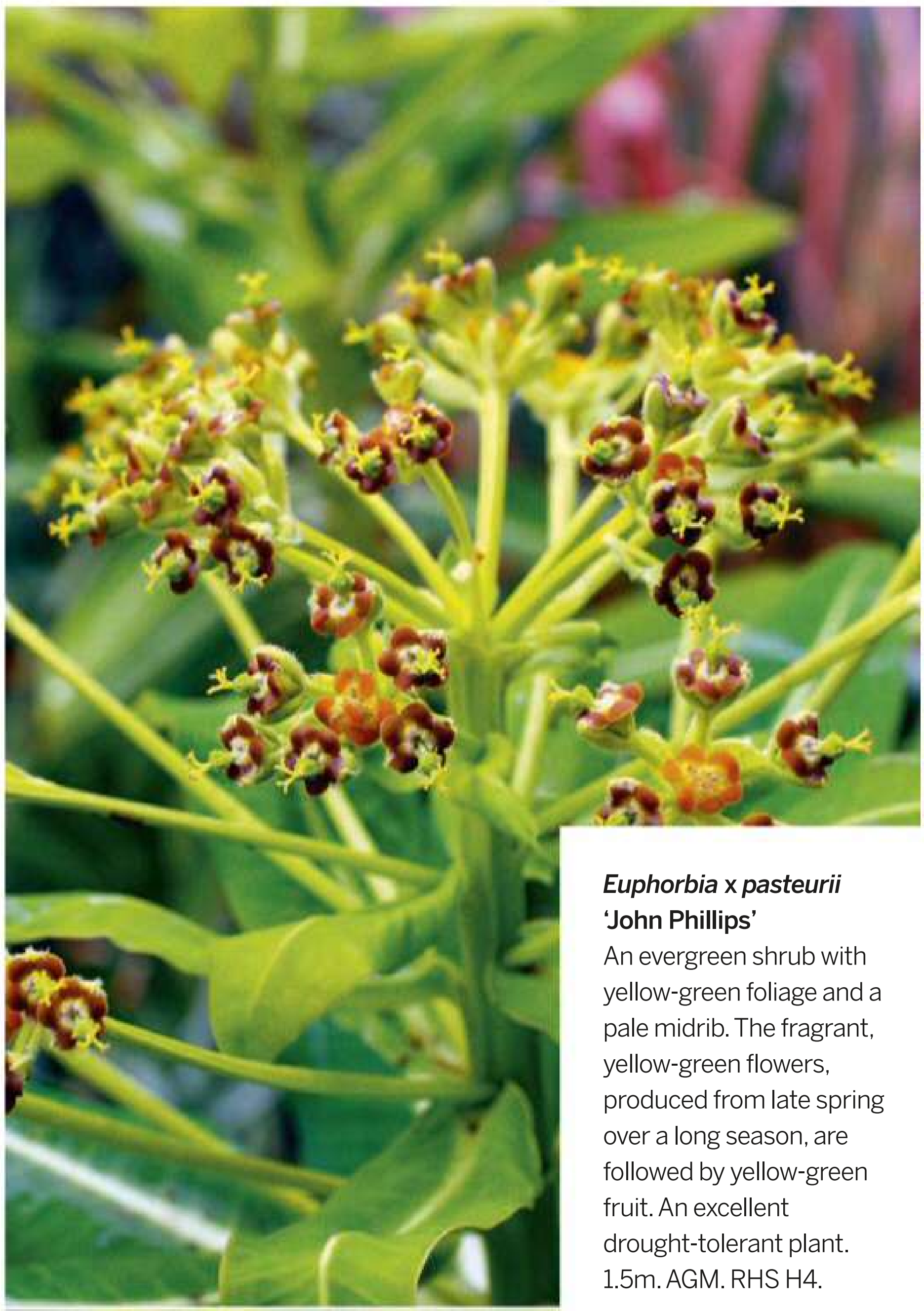


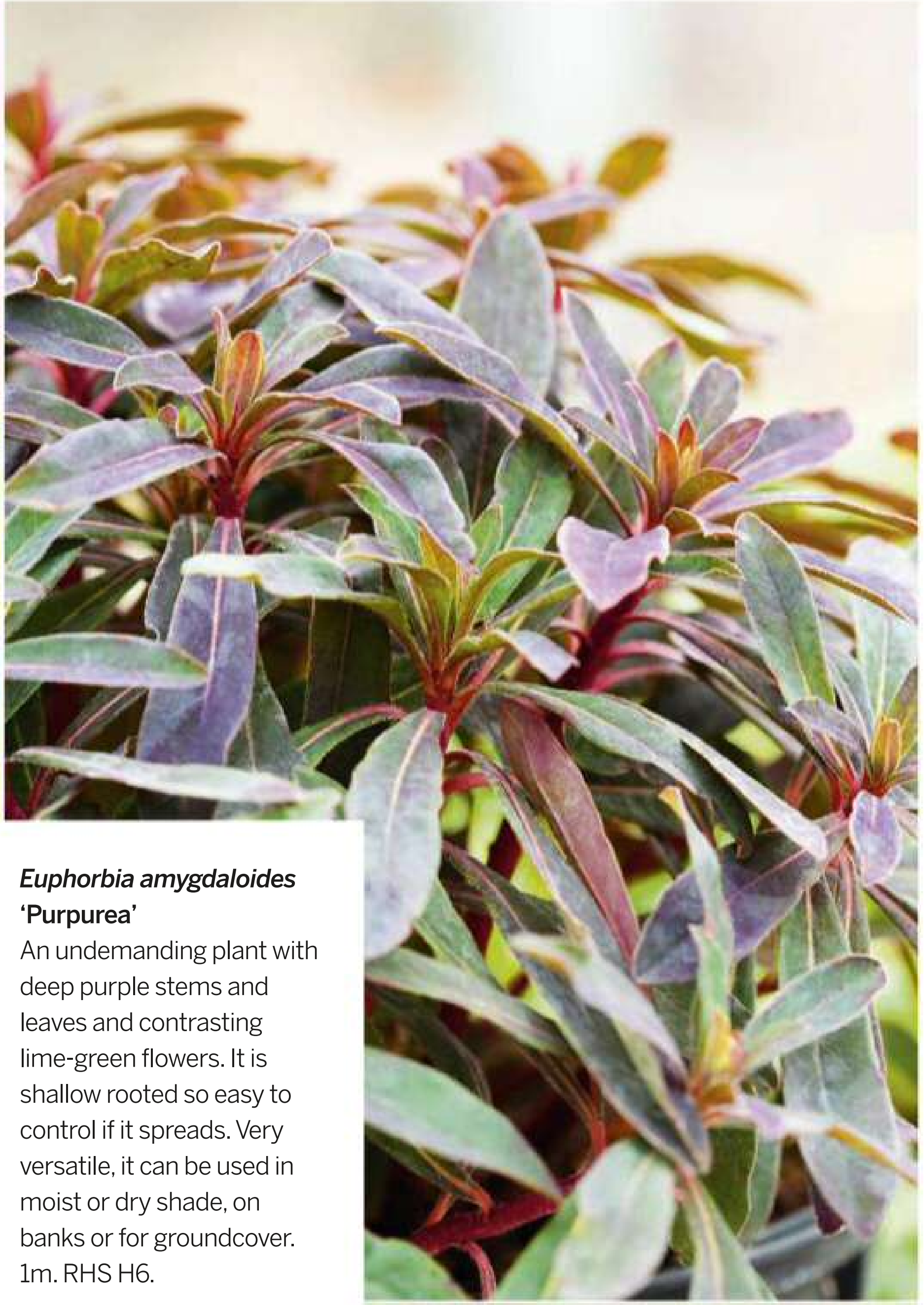
Euphorbia characias 'Black Pearl'
A clump-forming cultivar that is much loved by pollinating insects. Its lime-green flowers have purple nectar-filled 'eyes'. An ideal euphorbia to grow in containers or borders in well-drained, light soil in full sun. 1m. RHS H4, USDA 6a-8b.



Euphorbia cyparissias 'Fens Ruby'
This fabulous deciduous plant creates a carpet of fine, purple leaves and stems topped by greenish-yellow flowers from late spring. Ideal for gravel gardens, it is also excellent in coastal gardens and good for pollinators. 50cm. RHS H7.

FIONA MCLEOD / GAP PHOTOS; FLOWERPHOTOS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP / MARTIN HUGHES-JONES; MIKE JARMAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



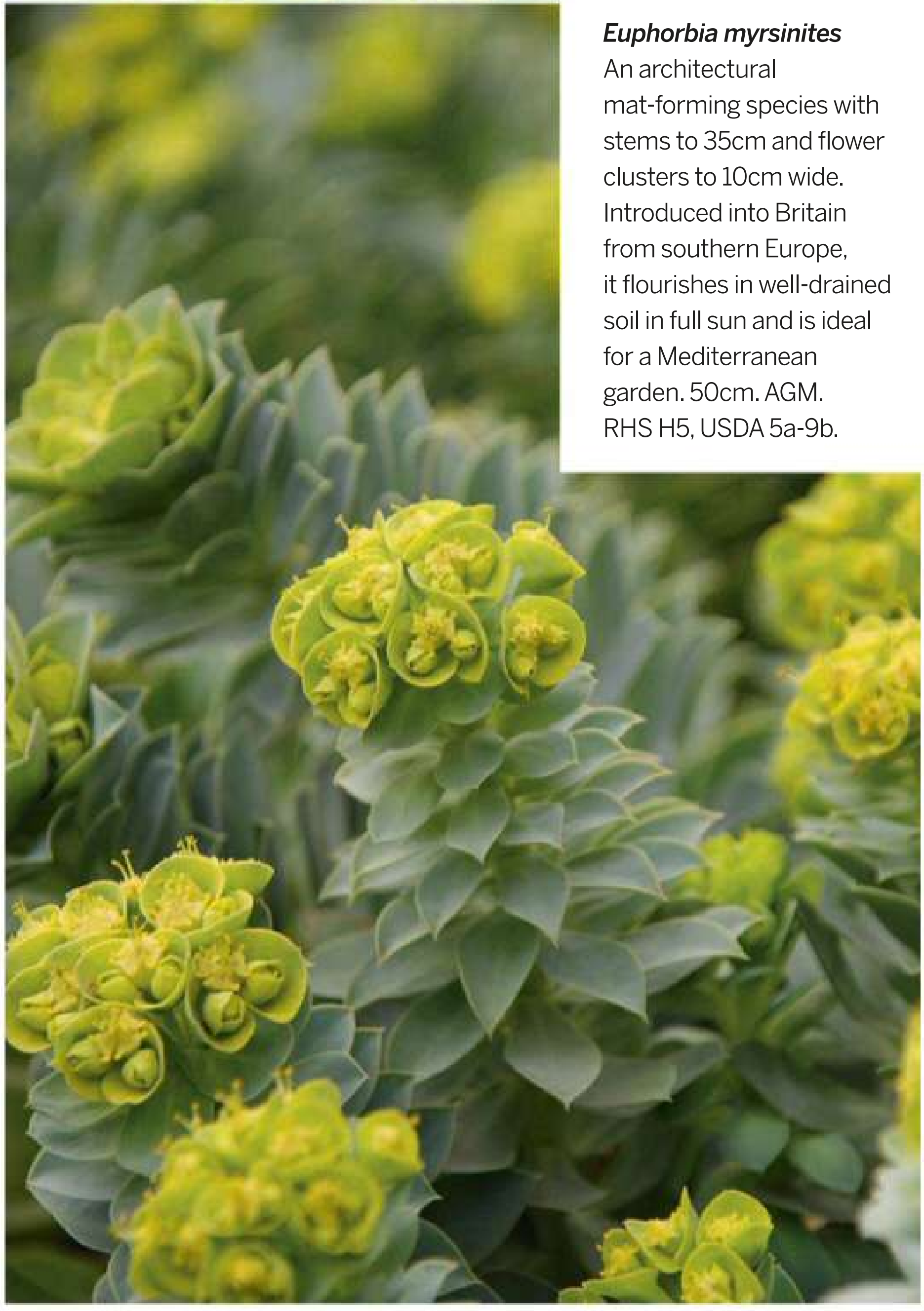


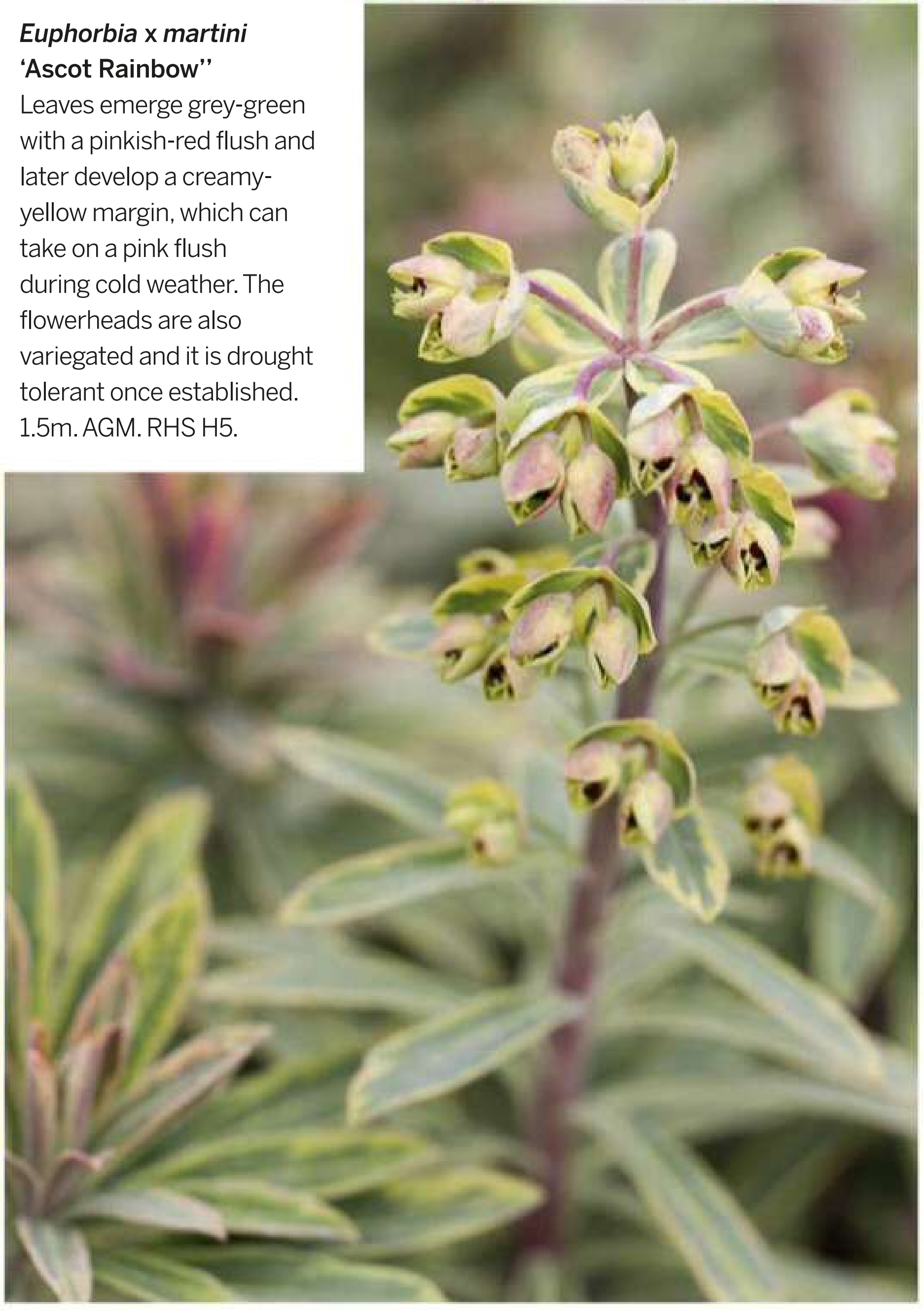
Euphorbia* x *pasteurii
'John Phillips'
An evergreen shrub with yellow-green foliage and a pale midrib. The fragrant, yellow-green flowers, produced from late spring over a long season, are followed by yellow-green fruit. An excellent drought-tolerant plant. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H4.

Euphorbia amygdaloides
'Purpurea'
An undemanding plant with deep purple stems and leaves and contrasting lime-green flowers. It is shallow rooted so easy to control if it spreads. Very versatile, it can be used in moist or dry shade, on banks or for groundcover. 1m. RHS H6.

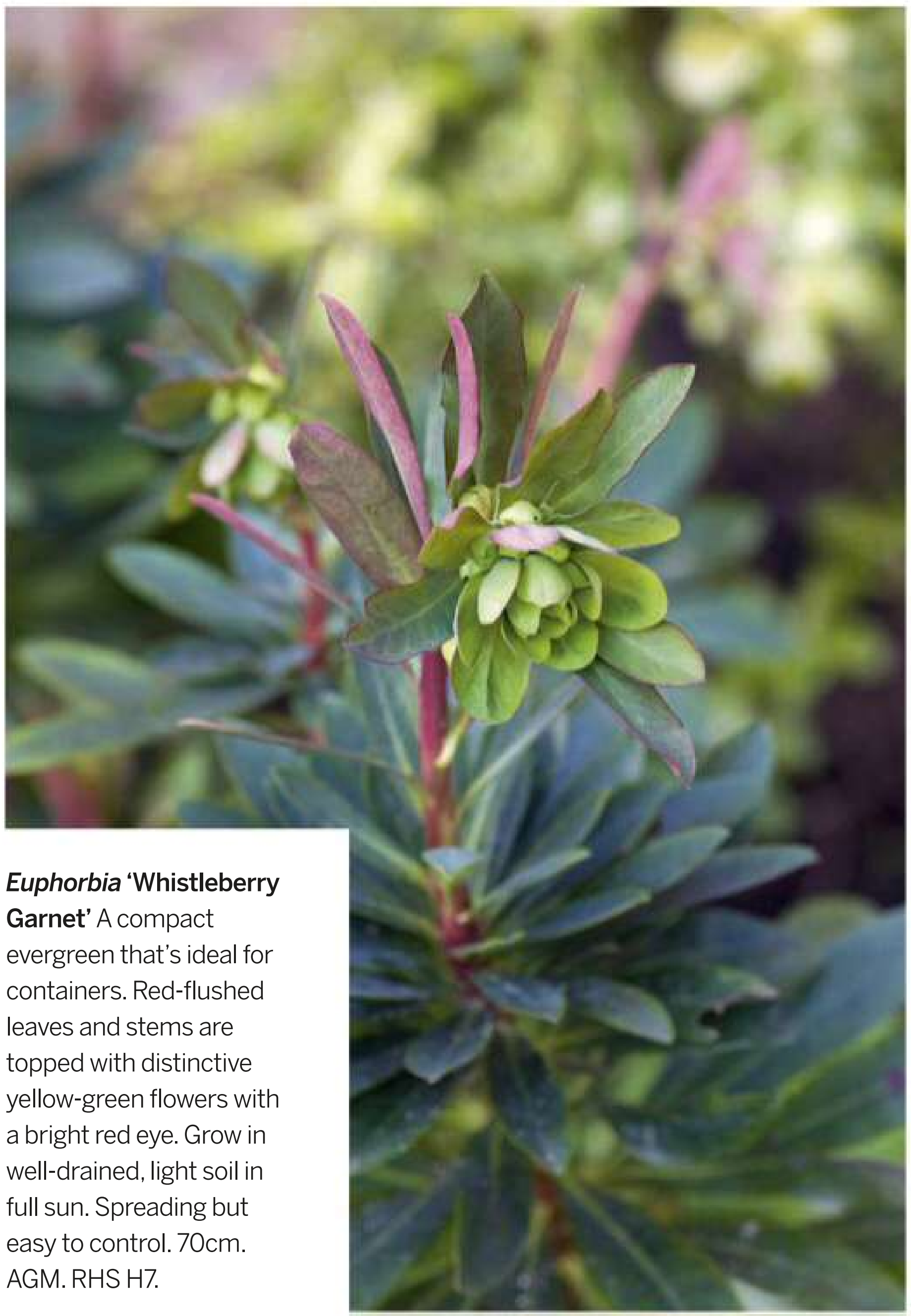
Euphorbia myrsinites
An architectural mat-forming species with stems to 35cm and flower clusters to 10cm wide. Introduced into Britain from southern Europe, it flourishes in well-drained soil in full sun and is ideal for a Mediterranean garden. 50cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Euphorbia* x *martini
'Ascot Rainbow''
Leaves emerge grey-green with a pinkish-red flush and later develop a creamy-yellow margin, which can take on a pink flush during cold weather. The flowerheads are also variegated and it is drought tolerant once established. 1.5m. AGM. RHS H5.

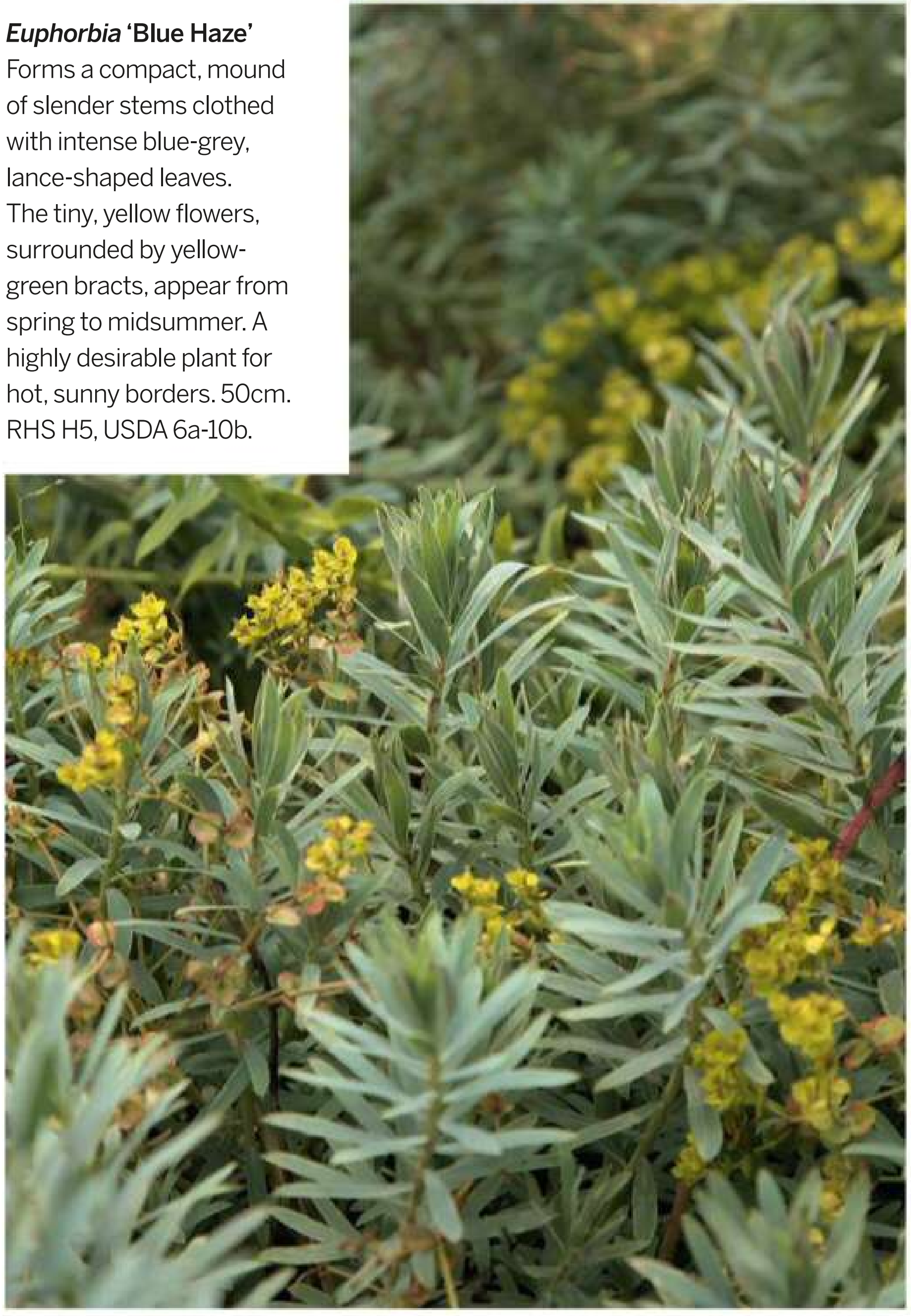




MART N HUGHES-JONES / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; RACHEL WARNE; L Z EVERY / GAP PHOTOS; THE GARDEN COLLECTION/FP/CHRISTINE ANN FÖLL.



***Euphorbia* 'Whistleberry Garnet'** A compact evergreen that's ideal for containers. Red-flushed leaves and stems are topped with distinctive yellow-green flowers with a bright red eye. Grow in well-drained, light soil in full sun. Spreading but easy to control. 70cm. AGM. RHS H7.



***Euphorbia* 'Blue Haze'** Forms a compact, mound of slender stems clothed with intense blue-grey, lance-shaped leaves. The tiny, yellow flowers, surrounded by yellow-green bracts, appear from spring to midsummer. A highly desirable plant for hot, sunny borders. 50cm. RHS H5, USDA 6a-10b.

LYNN KEDDIE / GAP PHOTOS; MARTIN HUGHES-JONES / GAP PHOTOS

Propagation and pruning

You can propagate euphorbias by taking basal cuttings from young, non-flowering shoots in mid-spring, but wear protection while doing so. Select and remove material early in the morning and put it in a polythene bag. Take cuttings 7-10cm long, making a cut at the base with a sharp knife. Remove the lower leaves, dip the cut in ground charcoal to seal the wound. Knock off the excess, make a hole with a dibber or pencil into a pot of 50:50 mix of sieved peat-free compost and perlite or cutting compost, and water. Put the pot in a propagator with bottom heat of 18-24ºC in bright but not scorching sunlight. Keep the compost moist, removing dead, diseased or dying material daily. Rooting takes up to a month. After rooting, harden off the cuttings and re-pot them into individual pots before transplanting outdoors. Many species self-seed in gravel borders or cracks in paving (cultivars must be propagated vegetatively as they do not come true from seed). They can also be divided in early spring, using a sharp knife, though the woody roots can make this challenging.

Pruning

Once the bracts of *Euphorbia* x *pasteurii*, *E. amygdaloides*, *E. mellifera* and *E.* Blackbird (= 'Nothowlee') have turned brown, cut off the dead growth to the first ring of leaves below. *E.* x *martini* and *E. myrsinites* have two types of stems; those from the previous season on which the flowers appeared, and the new season's growth. Cut out the stems that flowered the previous year down to ground level in late summer or autumn. Herbaceous perennials, such as *E. cyparissias*, *E. griffithii* and *E. sikkimensis*, should be deadheaded after flowering then cut back to ground level before the first frosts.

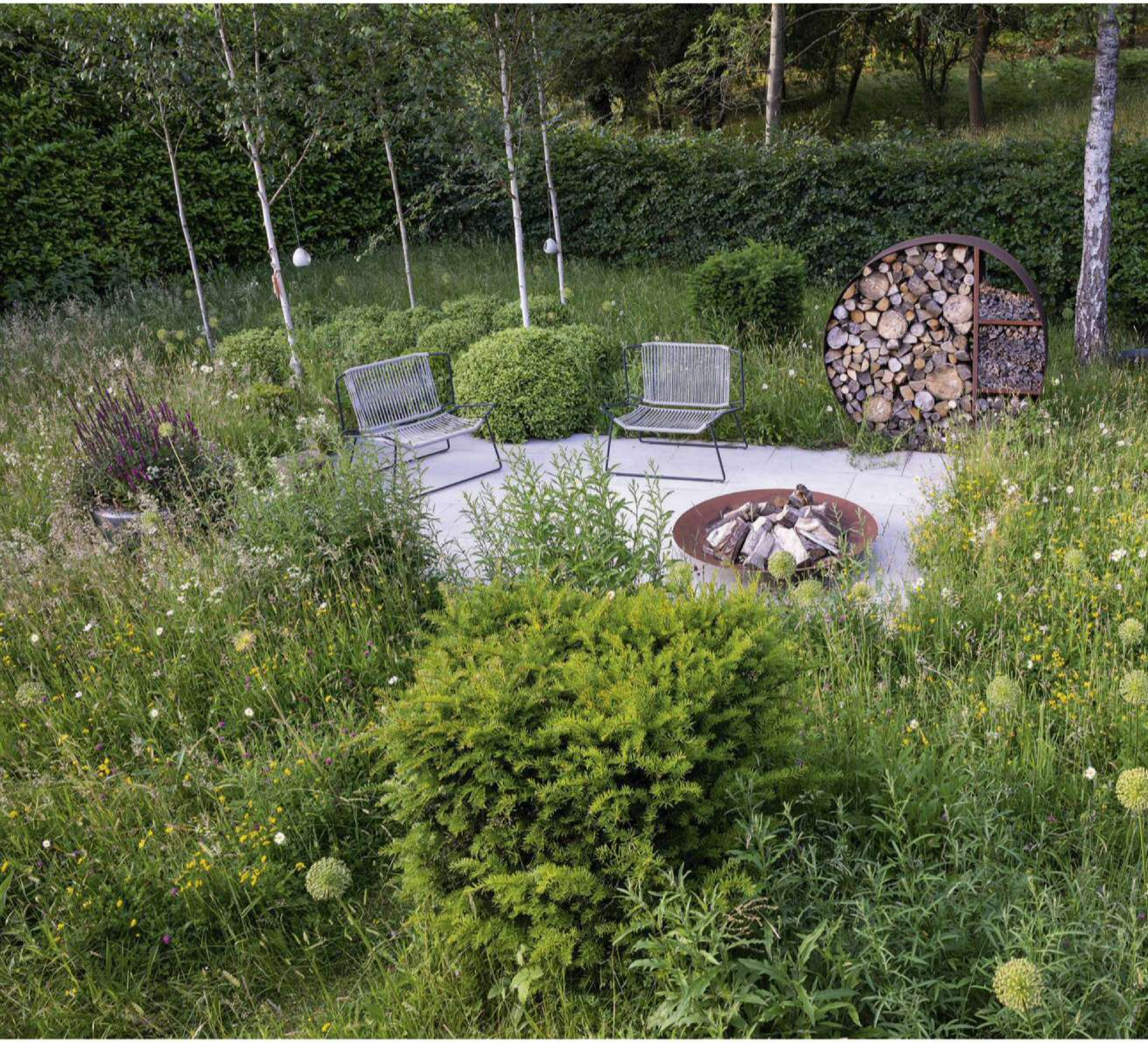
Good companions

Euphorbias work well in many different planting schemes. Those preferring hot, dry conditions grow well in gravel gardens among lavenders, salvias, cistus and Mediterranean bulbs, such as alliums and nerines. *E. amygdaloides* 'Purpurea' creates a wonderful contrast with *Milium effusum* 'Aureum' while the bold architectural domes of *E.* x *pasteurii* 'John Phillips' and *E. mellifera* are perfect specimen plants in an exotic border where their foliage combines well with cannas, hedychiums and dahlias.

Where to buy and see

- **Burncoose Nurseries**
  Gwennap, Redruth,
  Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
  Tel 01209 860011,
  burncoose.co.uk
- **Claire Austin Hardy Plants** White Hopton Farm,
  Wern Lane, Sarn,
  Newtown, Powys SY16 4EN.
  Tel 01686 670342,
  claireaustin-hardyplants.co.uk
- **Crûg Farm Plants**
  Griffith's Crossing,
  Caernarfon,
  Gwynedd LL55 1TU.
  Tel 01248 670232,
  crug-farm.co.uk
- **Don Witton***
  26 Casson Drive,
  Harthill, Sheffield,
  South Yorkshire S26 7WA.
  Tel 01909 771366.
  Open by appointment only.
- **Larch Cottage Nurseries**
  Melkinthorpe, Penrith,
  Cumbria CA10 2DR.
  Tel 01931 712404,
  larchcottage.co.uk
- **University of Oxford Botanic Garden & Arboretum***
  Rose Lane, Oxford OX1 4AZ.
  Tel 01865 610300,
  botanic-garden.ox.ac.uk

*National Collection holders



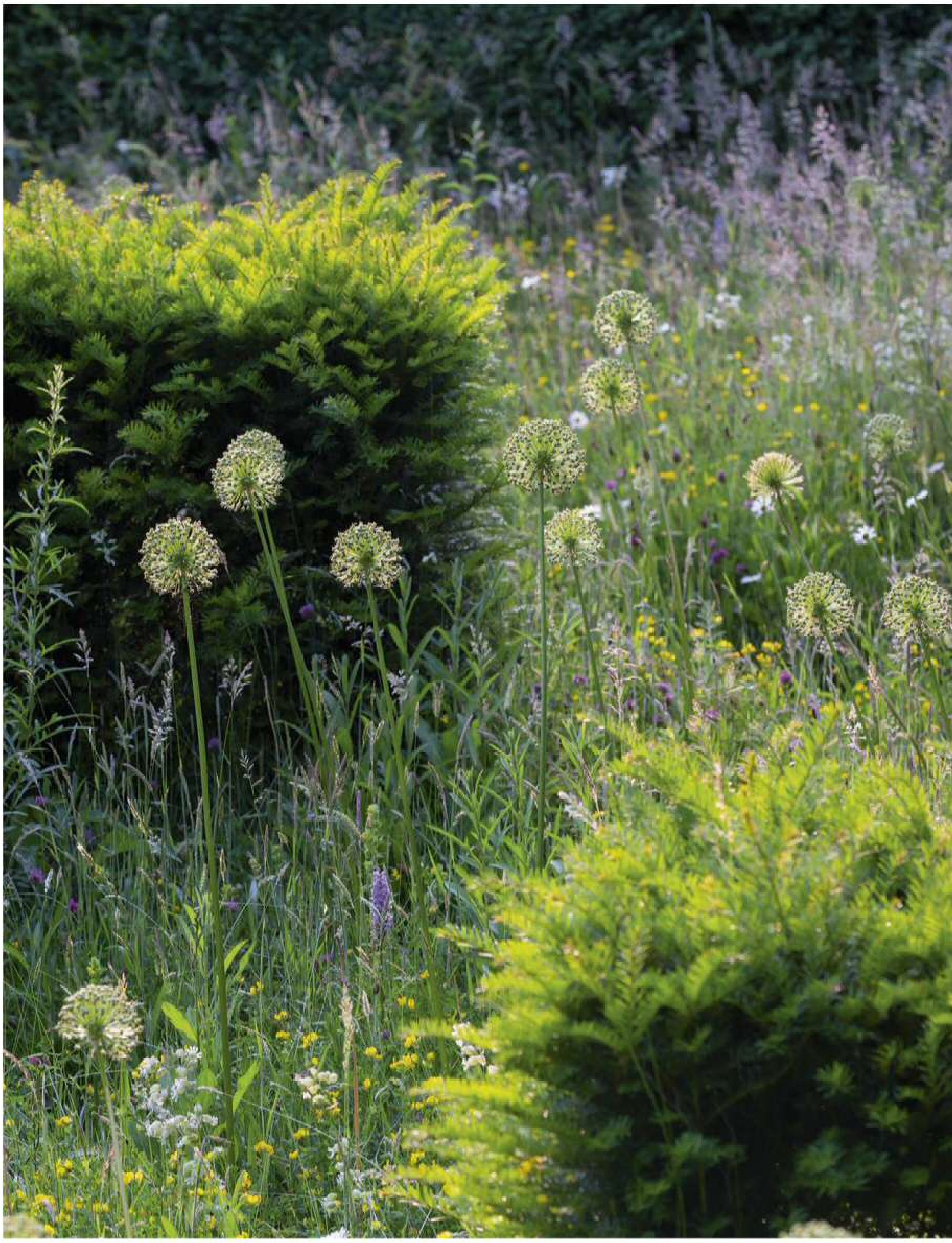
Call of the wild

For her own garden in rural Kent, designer Amanda Buckland has given the natural meadow-style planting she loves a modern twist by contrasting its softness with more formal evergreens and contemporary hard landscaping

WORDS MATT COLLINS PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

IN BRIEF

What A ‘modern meadow’ contrasting soft wildflowers with contemporary hard surfaces.
Where Kent.
Size Quarter of an acre.
Soil Sandy, free-draining.
Climate Temperate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

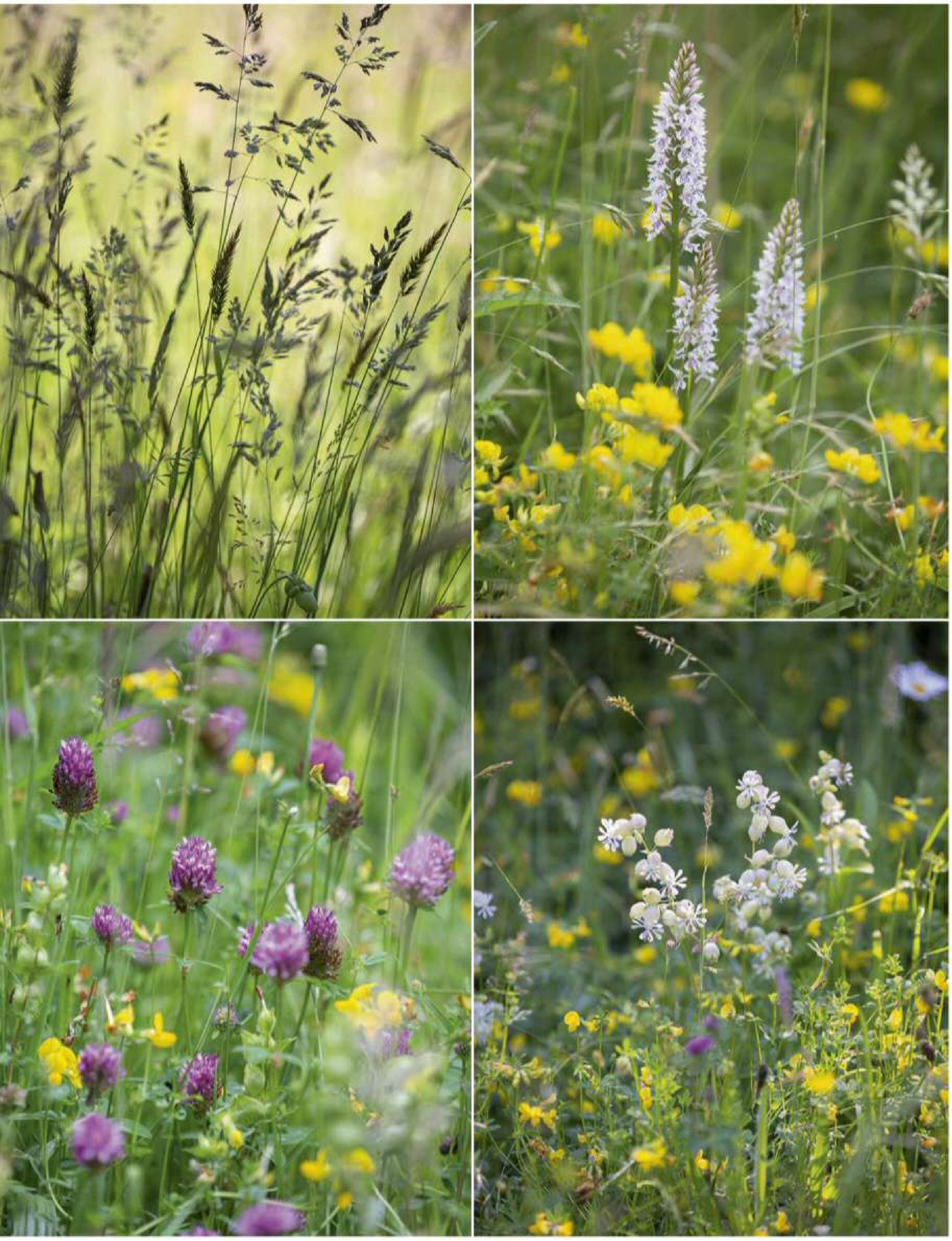


Harmony and simplicity are key principles for Greencube Design in Kent, a landscape company with the aim of marrying clients’ interests and lifestyle with their garden. When it came to designing the home patch, therefore – self-dubbed a ‘modern meadow’ for its contrasting hard and soft elements – Amanda Buckland’s love of nature, wildlife and conservation guided the brief. “It’s about giving a bit of space back to nature,” she says, describing her quarter-acre back garden as “a bee and butterfly nectar pot, and a place to rest and to contemplate.”

In common with her husband and avid birdwatcher Mike, one of Amanda’s life passions is visiting UK nature reserves for wildflowers and wildlife alike, often photographing resident species. But it was through visiting Great Dixter in East Sussex – where traditional hay meadows have long been managed and maintained – that the idea of a flower-rich haven complemented by formal evergreens took hold. Much like Dixter’s famed topiary, a combination of clipped yew ▷

Facing page Sawn sandstone slabs form a stylish terrace enveloped by the mass of ever-changing wildflowers. This central island is structurally in step with the robust, clipped outlines of *Pittosporum tenuifolium* ‘Golf Ball’, box and yew that contrast with the intricate and engaging meadow.

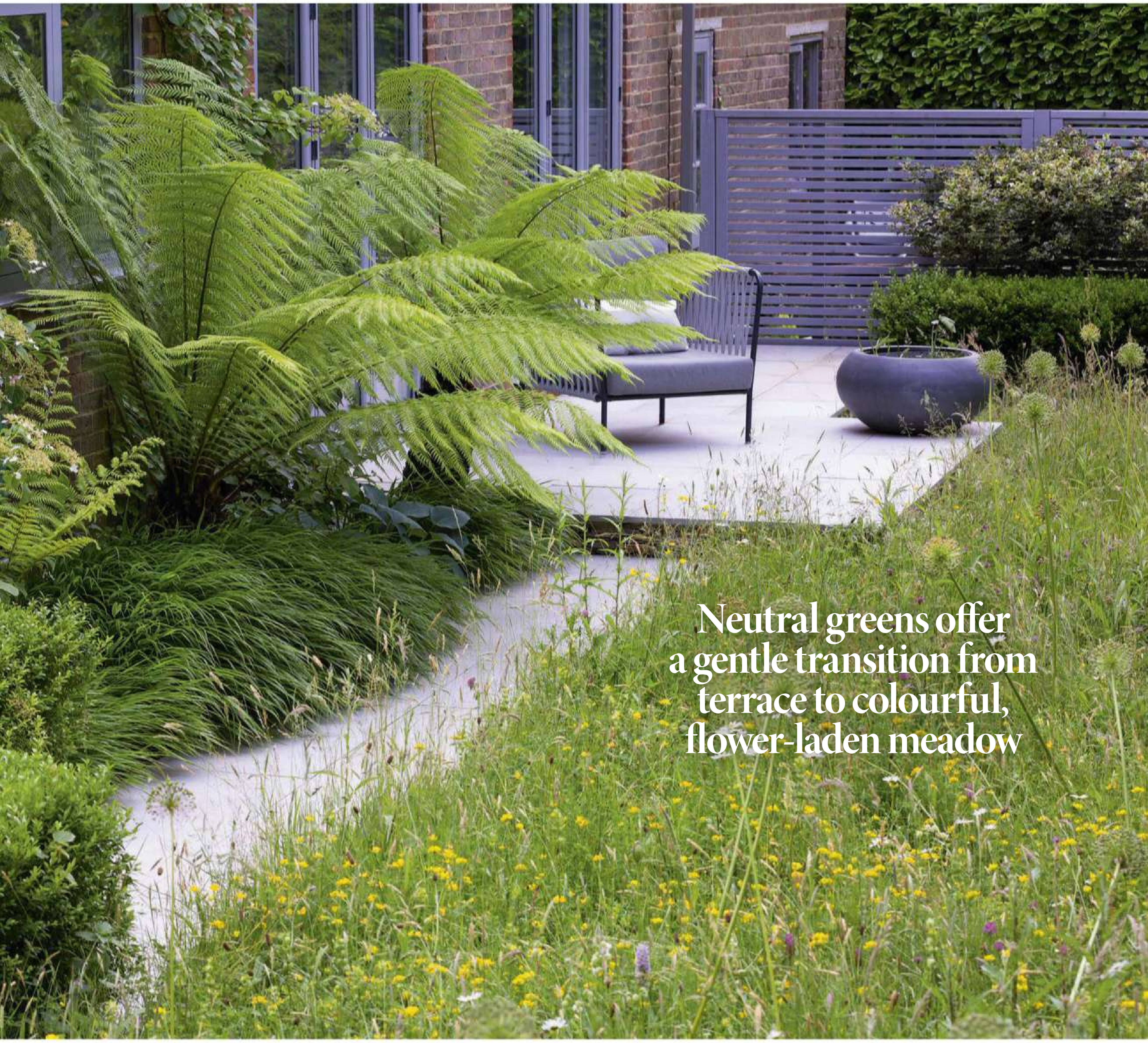
Above Architectural seedheads of *Allium stipitatum* ‘Mount Everest’ remain standing as summer flowers come into season. Meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) is a particular favourite of Amanda’s. “They are just so lovely, warm and wonderful when the sun is shining on them,” she says.



Above, clockwise from top left Native grasses are integral to the meadow mix, however Amanda pulls them from areas where they have become thuggish and will out-compete flowers; delicate common spotted orchids have increased in recent years; white bladder campion and bird's foot trefoil enjoy the meadow's light, sandy soil; red clover catches dappled summer light.

▷ buttresses, pittosporum domes and architectural birch trees add composition to the overall picture, creating structure within the soft floatiness of the meadow. Equally integral is a central terrace of sawn sandstone, which places a seating area within the sunny heart of the meadow, reached via a low-mown path. A bespoke log-store made from weathering Corten steel provides the focal point, rather than a source of firewood, however, the large metal ring, concreted into the ground, serves as a bug hotel for overwintering pollinators. On spring afternoons, with a cup of tea, the terrace is a platform from which to view birds, bees and early butterflies, such as orange-tips and brimstones, flitting over the conspicuous purple-speckled leaves of common spotted orchids. "It's just a delightful space to sit in, de-stress and to free your mind," says Amanda.

Although Amanda's meadow has other houses and gardens on either side, to the rear lies an open smallholding once grazed by horses and alpacas, and now overgrown with bracken, hawthorn and birch. "It's pretty wild – I wanted our garden to connect with that borrowed view," she says. At the back of the garden a beech hedge is therefore clipped low along the fence ▷

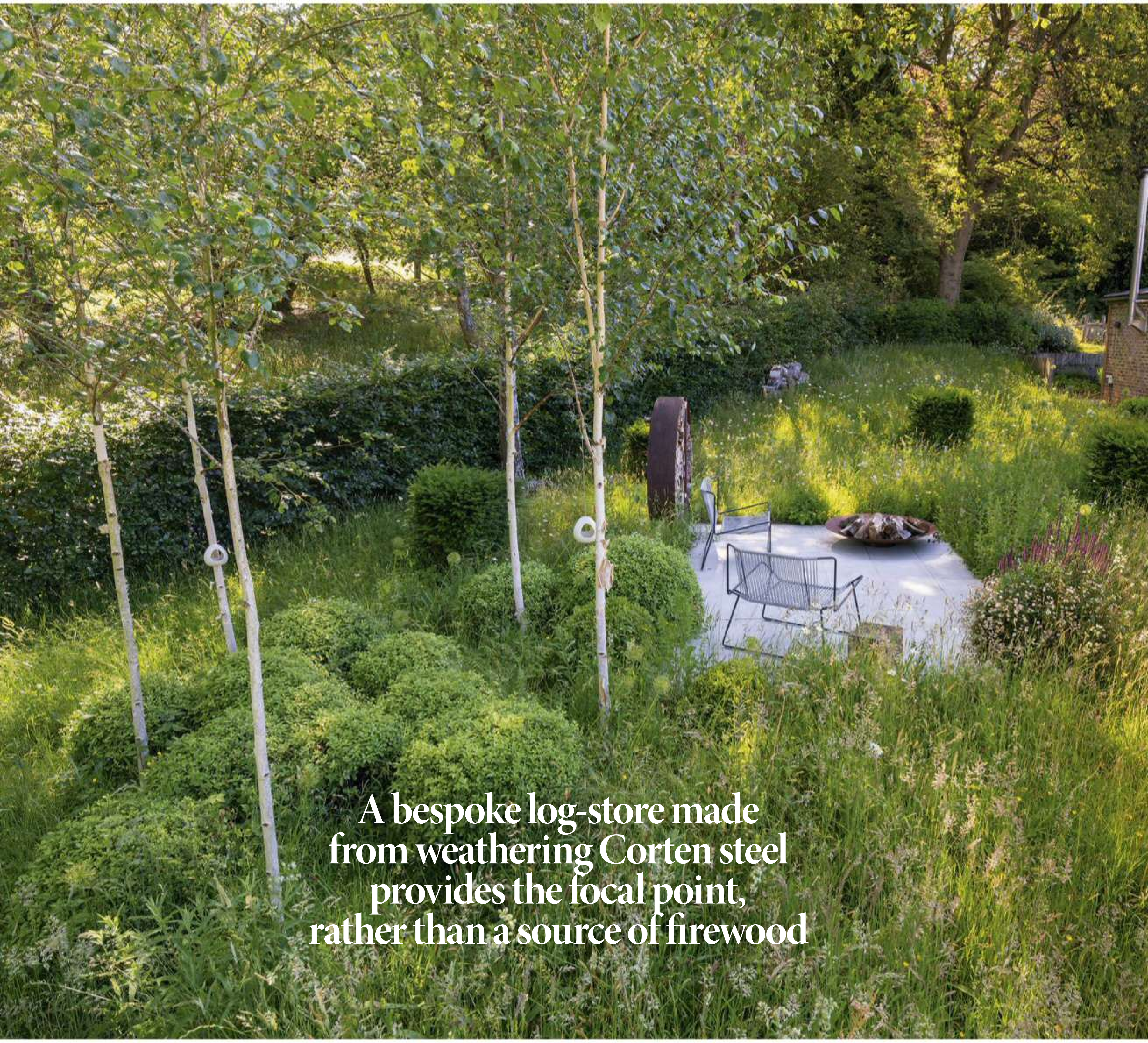


Neutral greens offer a gentle transition from terrace to colourful, flower-laden meadow

Meadow making

The foundation for a successful meadow is selecting the right seed mix. "Work out what type of soil you have first, and then order a seed mix that applies," advises Amanda. "Fresh seed is best, and there are many good websites online that offer advice." Amanda suggests removing turf along with the top layer of nutrient-rich soil, before scratching the surface and raking-in seeds in spring. If you plant during a dry year, then you will need to water at least every three days to assist establishing plants. Amanda cuts her meadow once a year, usually around late summer, and then leaves the cuttings on the ground for two weeks to release seed. "I then collect them up and do a really harsh cut with the mower, almost down to the ground, allowing seeds to settle back into the soil." She edits by pulling up dominant grasses and reseeding with yellow rattle, occasionally adding annuals such as field poppy and cornflower, and spring bulbs including *Tulipa sylvestris* and red-orange *Tulipa* 'Ballerina'. "The bulbs give the meadow another dimension, without really spoiling the purity of it."

Above Deep shade at the back of the house inspired a border of refined greens: tree ferns arch above the low-growing *Hakonechloa macra*, and *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris* climbs the rear facade. An ornamental drinking bowl sits on the paving and is visited by badgers at night.



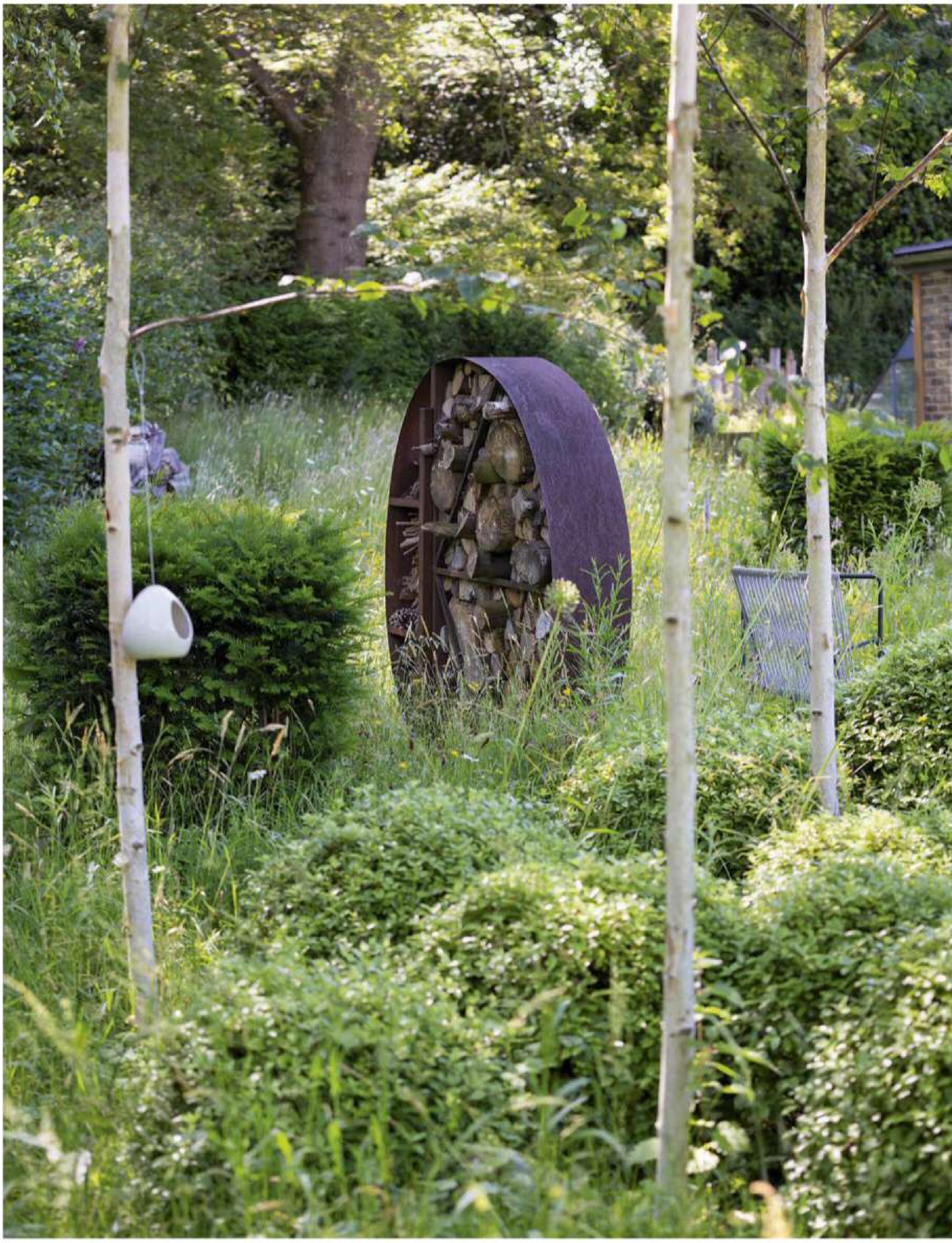
A bespoke log-store made from weathering Corten steel provides the focal point, rather than a source of firewood

Above Amanda's studio faces out on to the meadow via a large picture window. Grouped below a stand of establishing birch, large pittosporum domes add structure to the garden while *Salvia nemorosa* 'Pink Beauty' shines out from a terrace pot. Beyond lies a borrowed view of the neighbouring smallholding.

▷ line, and a large oak on the boundary gently filters overhead summer sunlight. "Because the meadow faces northeast, there's a real soft light that comes through the tree. It's beautiful."

Owing to the northerly aspect, she has integrated a shady border of elegant tree ferns (*Dicksonia antarctica*) and climbing *Hydrangea anomala* subsp. *petiolaris* within the house terrace, underplanting with soft, airy *Hakonechloa macra*. These neutral greens offer a gentle transition from terrace to colourful, flower-laden meadow. Even here, provision for nature is a priority: below the sandstone paving lie quartz paddlestones that offer crawlspaces for insects. "It's like a modern dry-stone wall with sandstone on top," explains Amanda. "It's been a great success for woodlice and lacewing either setting up home or hibernating in those little crevices."

Now approaching its seventh year, the meadow has come a long way since the seed was first cast. "Once seeded, we had to keep the birds off the bare soil," remembers Amanda. "I put pots on bamboo sticks to act as scarers until the seeds had germinated." In its first season it was dominated by annual flowers, mostly cornflowers and corn marigolds, which Amanda



loved. "But the meadow changes," she says. "The second year was a mass of oxeye daisies, and now we've got common spotted orchids multiplying year on year."

Among other perennial favourites are the bright yellows of bedstraw, buttercup, bird's foot trefoil and the creeping racemes of yellow rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), which Amanda tops up annually. "Yellow rattle weakens dominant grasses, so we'll scratch the ground and resow it each year, but also add in plug plants. Meadows aren't easy – they do need work to be successful." The rewards, however, are clearly manifold: not only a resource for diverse fauna including slow worms, butterflies, moths, hedgehogs and pipistrelle bats, the meadow has inspired numerous clients to accommodate an area of wildflowers in their own gardens. "It really is a little sanctuary," says Amanda. "I feel it's getting richer and evolving all the time." ☐

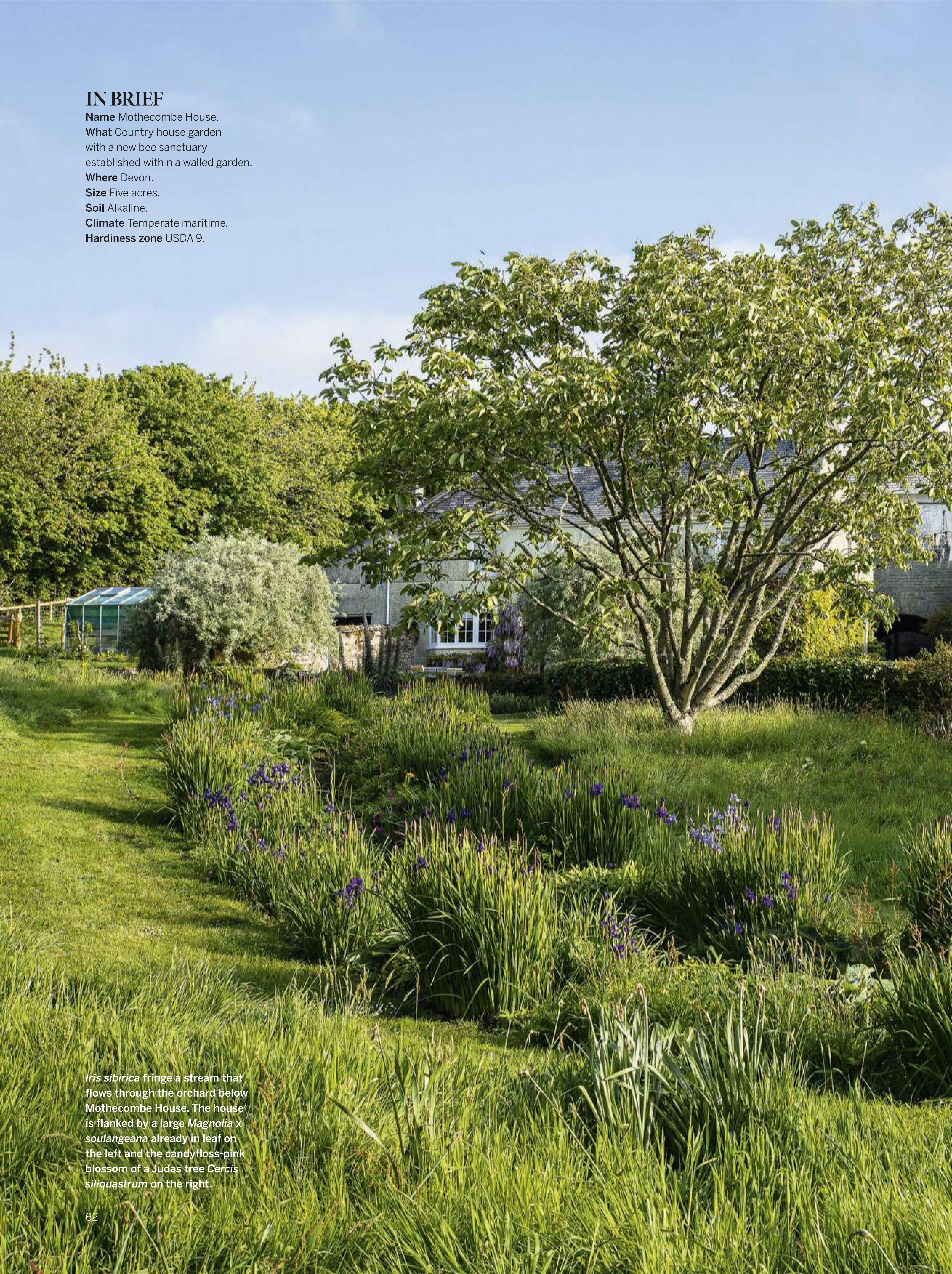
Above A focal point for the garden is the bespoke Corten steel log-store. "We've worked with a wonderful steel fabricator for the past 12 years," says Amanda. Designed as a bug hotel, the logs remain in situ. "We've found leaf-cutter bees laying eggs in the bamboo canes, which is lovely."

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find more information about Amanda's work at **greencubelandscapes.co.uk**

IN BRIEF

Name Mothecombe House.
What Country house garden with a new bee sanctuary established within a walled garden.
Where Devon.
Size Five acres.
Soil Alkaline.
Climate Temperate maritime.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

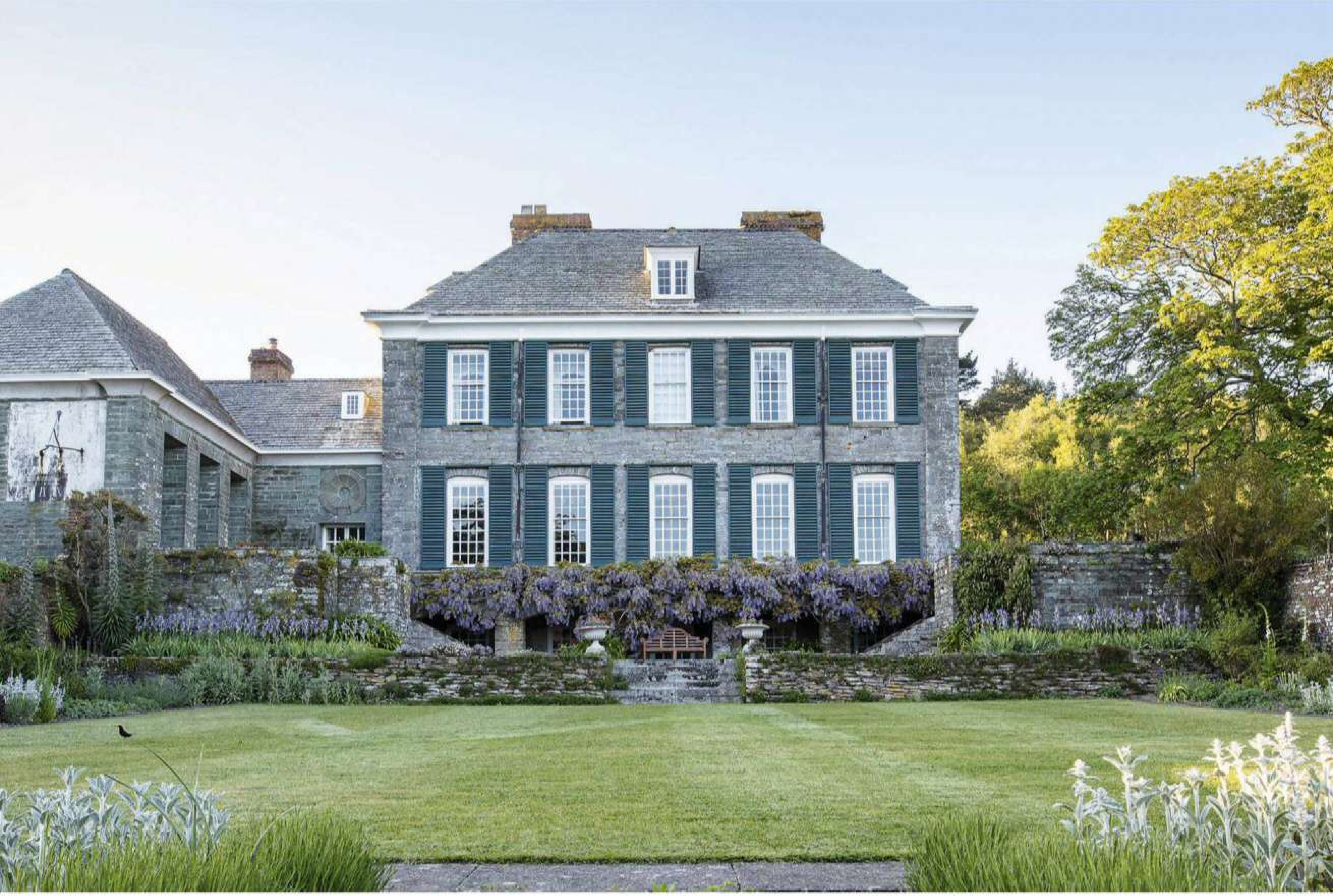


Iris sibirica fringe a stream that flows through the orchard below Mothecombe House. The house is flanked by a large *Magnolia* x *soulangeana* already in leaf on the left and the candyfloss-pink blossom of a Judas tree *Cercis siliquastrum* on the right.

Natural beauty

At Mothecombe House in south Devon the relaxed gardens now include a walled garden that has become a sanctuary for bees

WORDS **ISABEL BANNERMAN** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**



A Queen Anne House nestled in a wooded fold behind the sandy mouth of the River Erme, Mothecombe is the family hub of the Flete estate. The long-established garden includes a clutch of walled gardens and beyond the walled enclosures and an informal garden of flowering trees, shrubs, and massed bulbs is a tumbling brook, which leads to a sandy cove. Tucked away from the sea, the balmy garden, filled with tender botanical treasures, calcifuges, testified by nature's litmus test of blue hydrangeas, the combination of aspect and acidity offering all the treats of more famous gardens, it sits serene in its own magnificence.

Mothecombe House was built by John Pollexfen in about 1720 and has been home to the Mildmay family since the 1870s. Edwin Lutyens remodelled the house and immediate garden in 1925, which meant that there was already a formal structure of walled enclosures melting into an older orchard and groves of informal woodland underplanted with bulbs and wonders in the mid-century. In the 1950s, much of the garden was replanted by Helen Mildmay-White under the tutelage of her friend and plantsman extraordinaire, Lionel Fortescue, but since 1982 it has been Helen's daughter-in-law Anne Mildmay-White who has been the keeper of the garden helped by her husband Anthony, and now joined by their son John, who recently moved back to run the estate. In January 1990 a terrible storm ripped apart the southern protective woodland, opening up new opportunities as well as great losses. As Mothecombe has opened up, full-time head gardener, Martin Haxton, has been appointed to nurture this plum gardening position, while in the walled gardens Anne has come to value above all the ecological treasure at Mothecombe.

One walled garden has been turned into a bee haven, filled with 18 different bee-magnet lavenders, including *Lavandula* x *intermedia* cultivars 'Hidcote Giant', 'Grosso' and 'Abrialii', and several *Lavandula angustifolia* cultivars. In another walled garden Anne's son John is starting a new vegetable garden, where he hopes to show how pollinators can be helped by planting wildflowers and not using pesticides or herbicides. The grass grows long, making hay and wildflower meadows where once were pony paddocks; nettle and bramble patches are left for moths and butterflies. Anne has always gardened in this common sense, low-impact way sharing the world of slow worms, frogs and dragonflies with a wider audience.

Venturing out into the orchard, past the *Amaryllis belladonna* that cluster under the walls, a bulb tender and naked as the night when it flowers in September, you reach a brook. Bordered by *Iris sibirica* given ▷

To continue turn to page 70

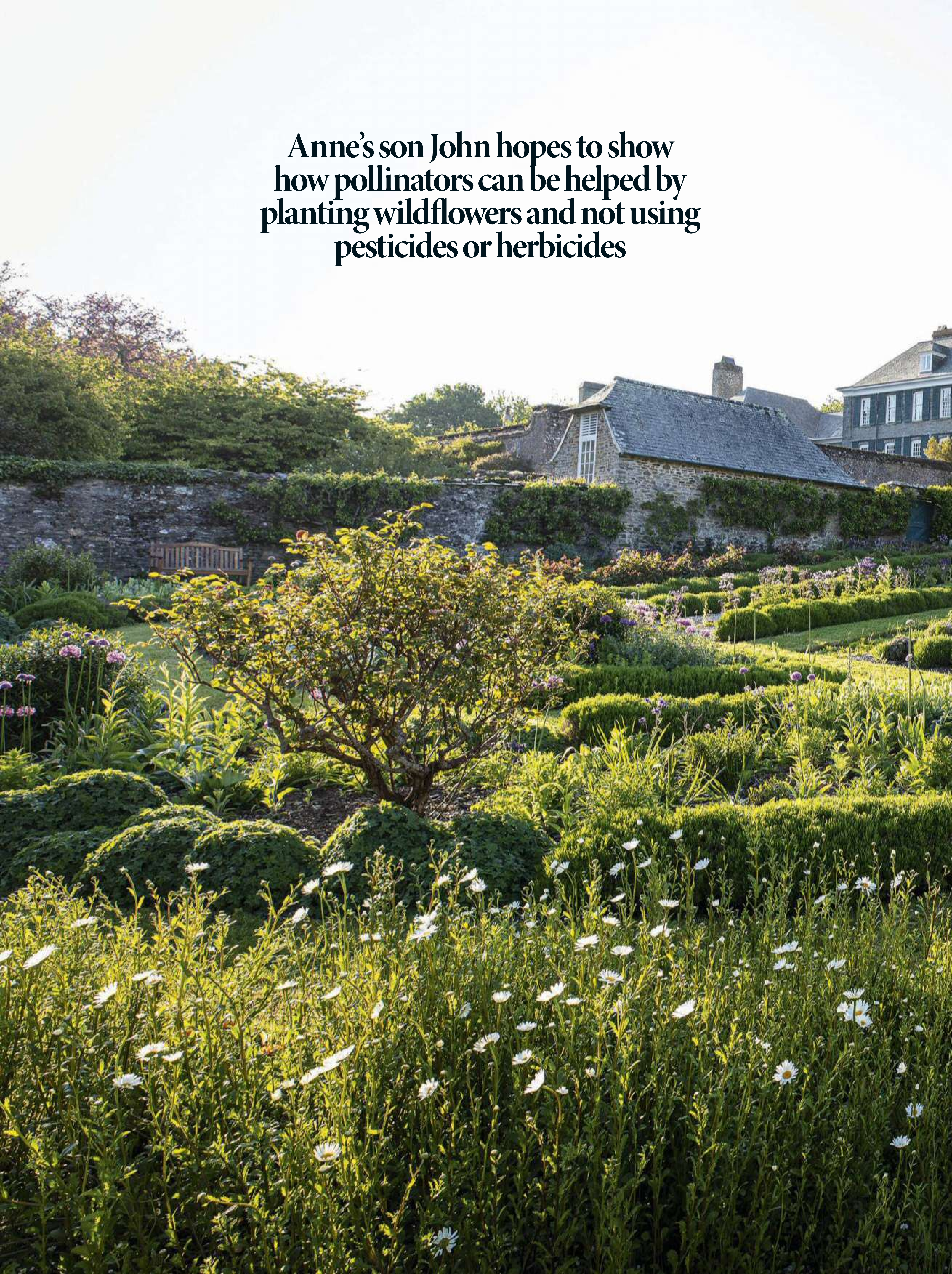
Above Built by John Pollexfen in around 1720, of local Ashlar slate, Mothecombe with its hipped slate roof complete with dormers looks very much like a child's picture book version of a country house. The wisteria terrace and steps leading down to the lawn were later added by Edwin Lutyens in 1925.

Right above In the formal walled garden a subtle planting of muted blue hues, leaves and flowers helps to blend the neat foreground with its wild environs. Early rising cardoons provide architecture while the agapanthus and perennial planting gets going. In summer, roses, including the orange *Rosa* Whisky Mac (= 'Tanky') add pops of contrasting colour.

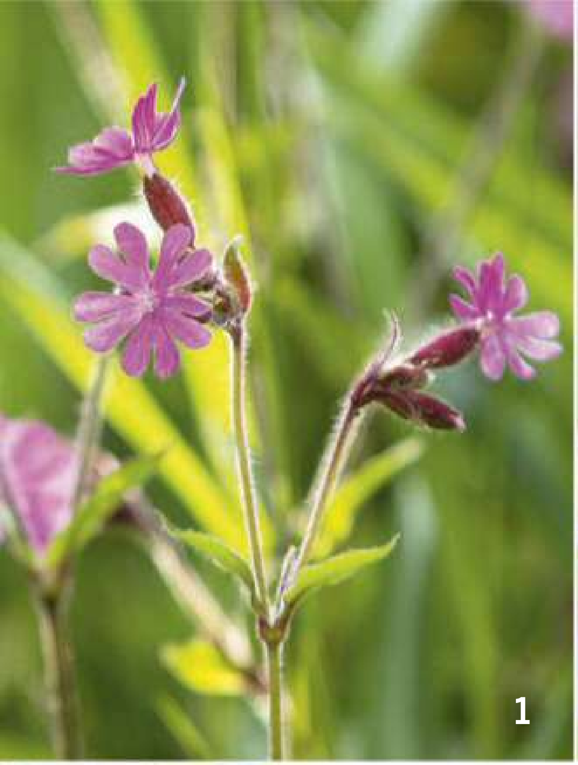
Right below Mothecombe's old kitchen garden has become a bee sanctuary, with borders, edged with lavender, overflowing with other bee favourites, such as foxgloves and *Stachys byzantina*. Purple, a colour bees see more clearly than others, dominates with alliums, thyme and self-seeded aquilegias surrounding mounds of *Hebe* 'Pink Paradise'.

The garden includes a clutch of walled gardens and beyond the walled enclosures an informal garden of flowering trees, shrubs and massed bulbs

Anne's son John hopes to show how pollinators can be helped by planting wildflowers and not using pesticides or herbicides



The ground of the original walled vegetable garden falls away to the south of the stables. More recently, this garden has become home to a collection of different lavenders and a mixed planting with alliums and aquilegias and herbs, such as thyme and sage, to encourage pollinators. Some grass is left long with oxeye daisies for the same reason.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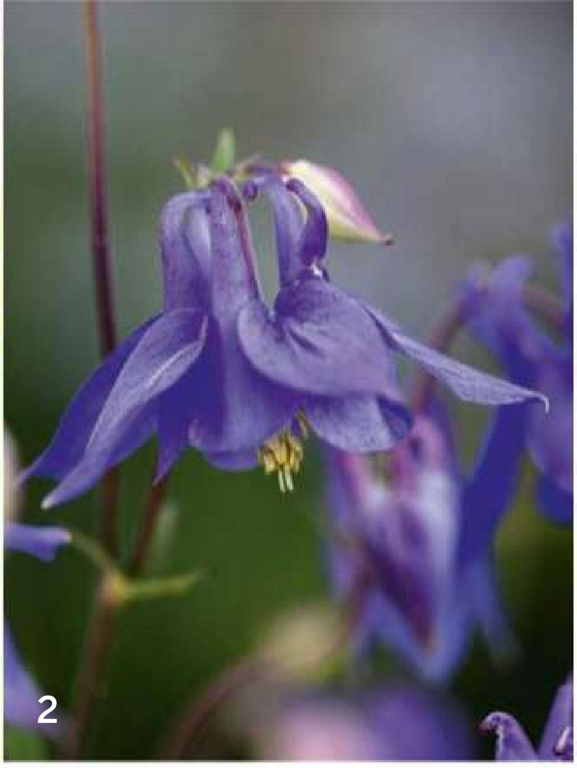
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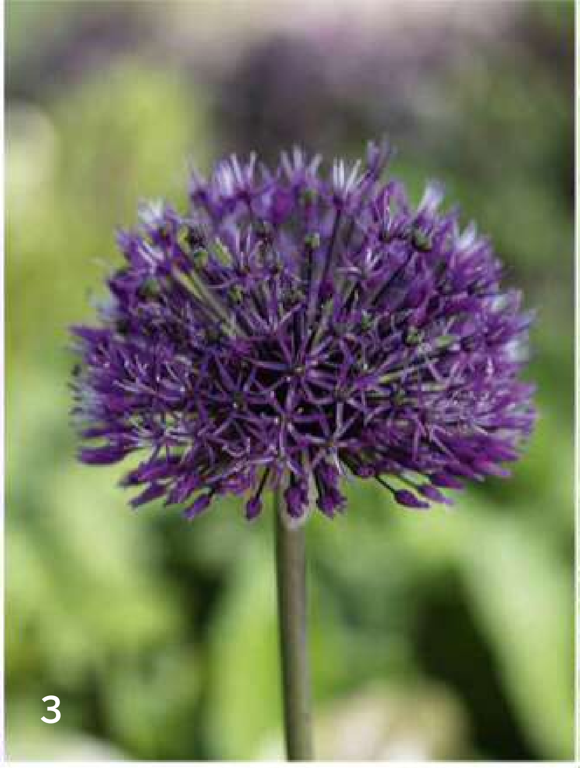
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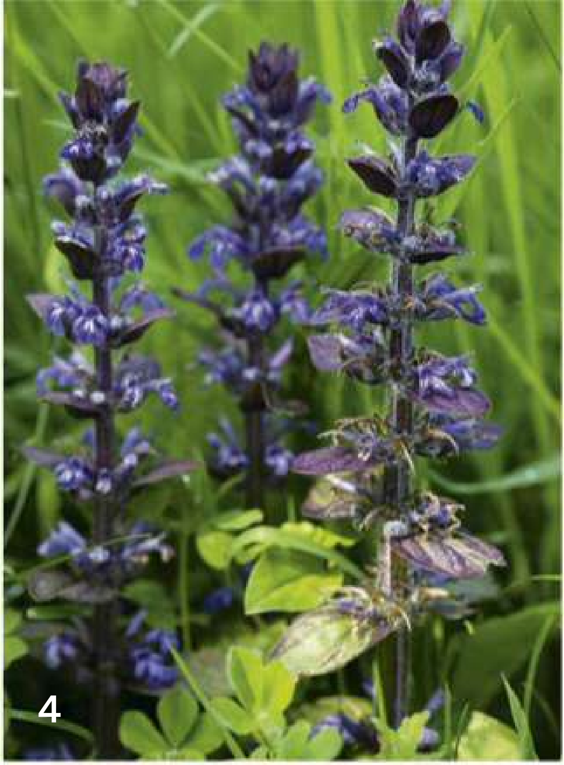
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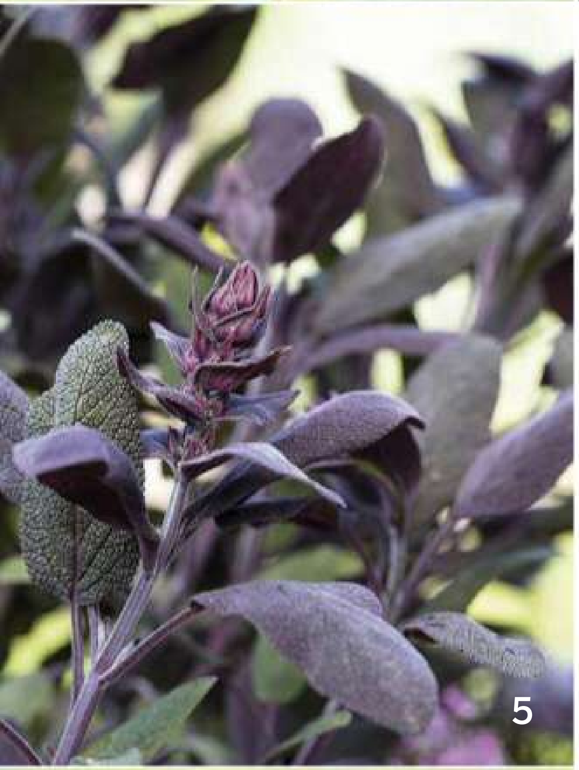
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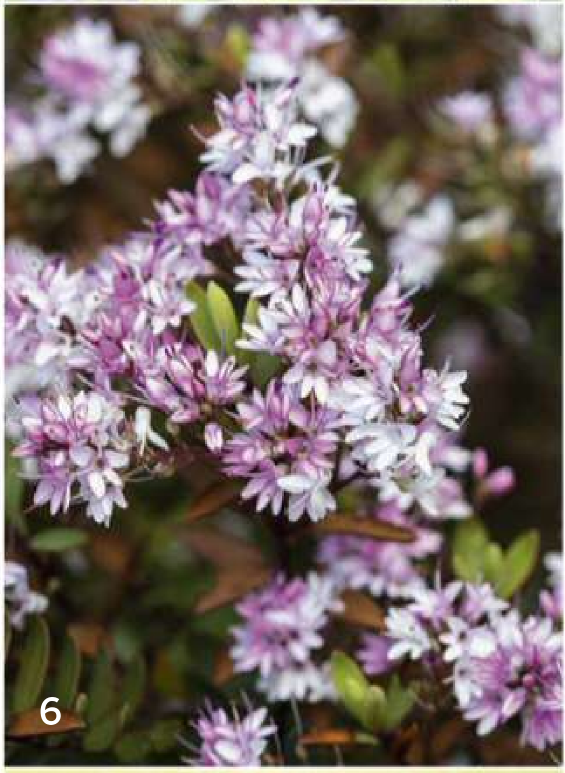
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 _Silene dioica_ A charming wild perennial with shocking pink flowers that complement and follow on from bluebells in woods but are lovely to let romp in beds and gravel. Easily grown from seed, they are spring flowering and scented at night. 80cm. USDA 5a-8b†.

2 _Aquilegia vulgaris_ A much-loved cottage garden plant that is easy to start from seed and lovely to let naturalise in gravel or beds. It hangs its violet blue flowers on knee-high stems in late spring. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

3 _Allium hollandicum_ 'Purple Sensation' An allium popular with both gardeners and bees. Their densely packed umbels of deep violet, star-shaped flowers appear in early summer above strap-shaped grey-green leaves. 1m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

4 _Ajuga reptans_ A member of the mint or dead nettle family. This low-growing and creeping, bugle has small, purple flowers and large, oval leaves spread out in a rosette at its base, with smaller leaves growing up its flower spike. It naturalises easily, spreading by stolons, and is easily included in wildflower seed mixes. 20cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-10b.

5 _Salvia officinalis_ 'Purpurascens' So useful and so beautiful, it makes delicious stormy coloured mounds of evergreen foliage up to a metre tall, and produces blue flowers in spring, making it a great edging or companion plant for more show off flowers. Tastes delicious and is easy to grow from seed or cuttings. 80cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

6 _Hebe_ 'Pink Paradise' A dwarf, compact, evergreen shrub that has small, light green, spear-shaped leaves. Hardy and evergreen, it has a profusion of pink flowers from early spring, forming an accent mound. 45cm.

7 _Scilla peruviana_ The lavender-blue flowerheads have star-like florets that open gradually over a period of three weeks or more. 40cm. RHS H4.

8 _Centaurea montana_ A clump-forming wildflower with unique lacy flowers in late spring, in vivid blue, or various mauves and white. Needs to be cut constantly, just before flowers open fully, if you want it to flower all summer. Propagate by seed or division. 50cm. USDA 3a-8b.

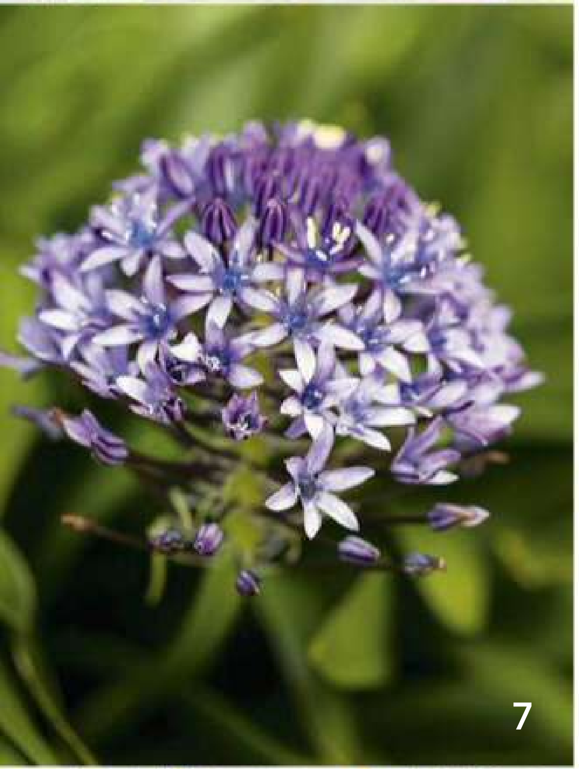
9 _Leucanthemum vulgare_ Great for pollinators, the oxeye daisy is easily grown from seed, and if sown in the open germinates readily in both spring and autumn. 90cm. USDA 3a-8b.

10 _Allium decipiens_ Native to Central Asia and China the flowerhead is a lilac-pink semi ball of star-shaped flowers. An easily sourced bulb that likes sunny borders and is great in pots with tulips and wallflowers. 45cm.

11 _Galactites tomentosa_ A large, conspicuous and hardy thistle with spiny stems and narrow leaves, attractively veined silver, pure white flowers in summer. Loved by pollinators. 1m.

12 _Iris sibirica_ Grows in swathes alongside the stream at Mothecombe, it is a really useful plant thanks to the verticality of its leaves and the prolific deep blue flowers of the species. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

***Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.**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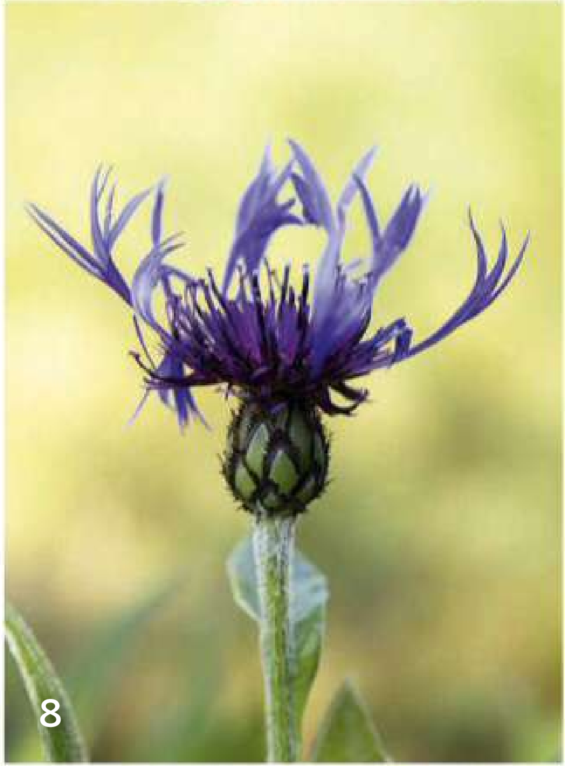
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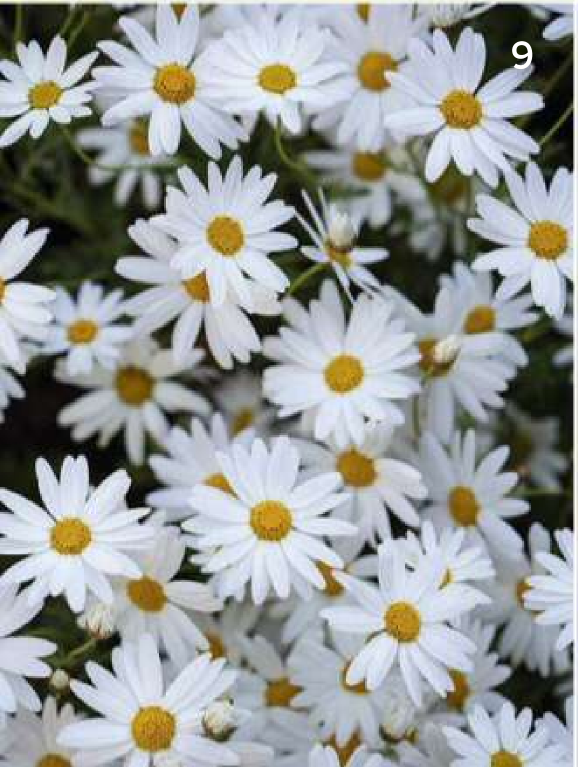
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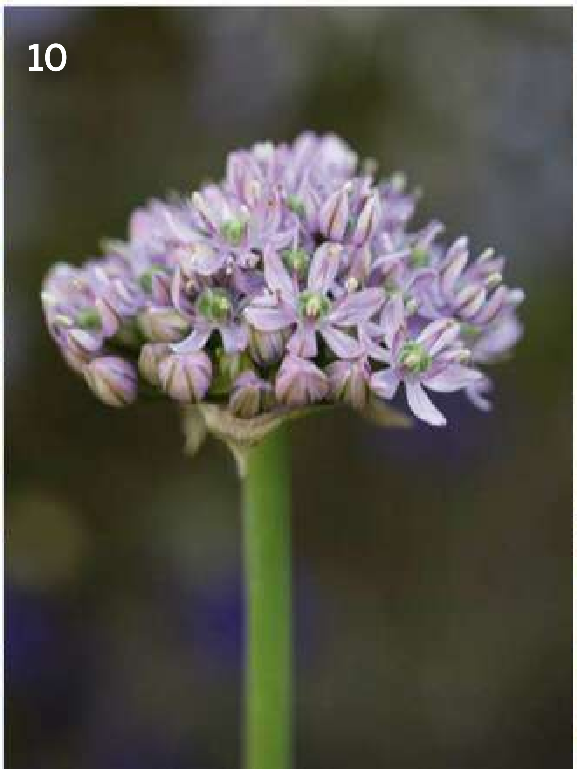
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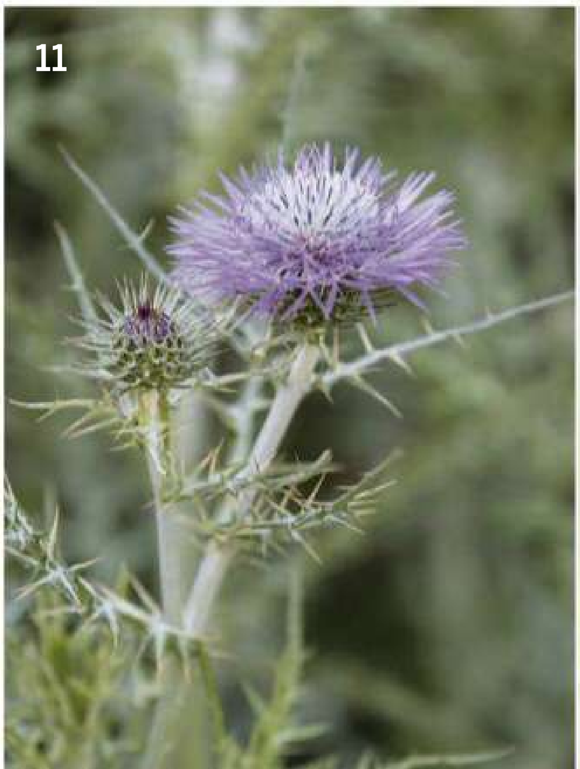
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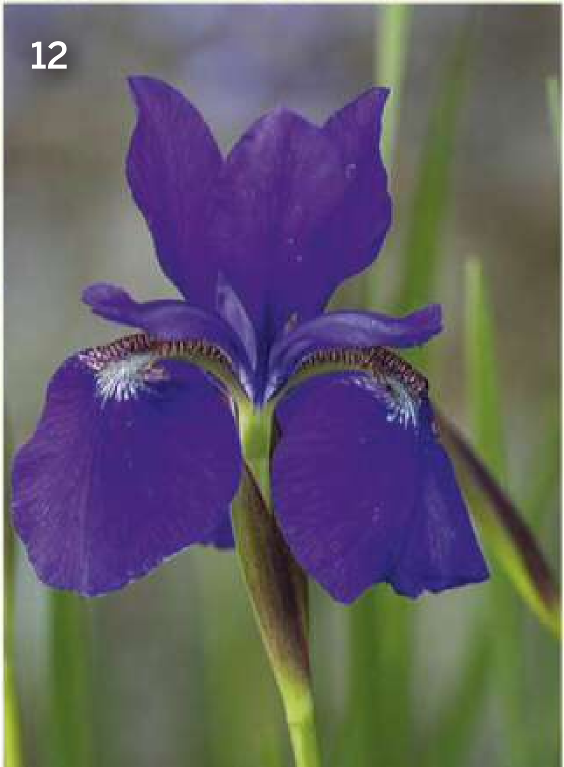
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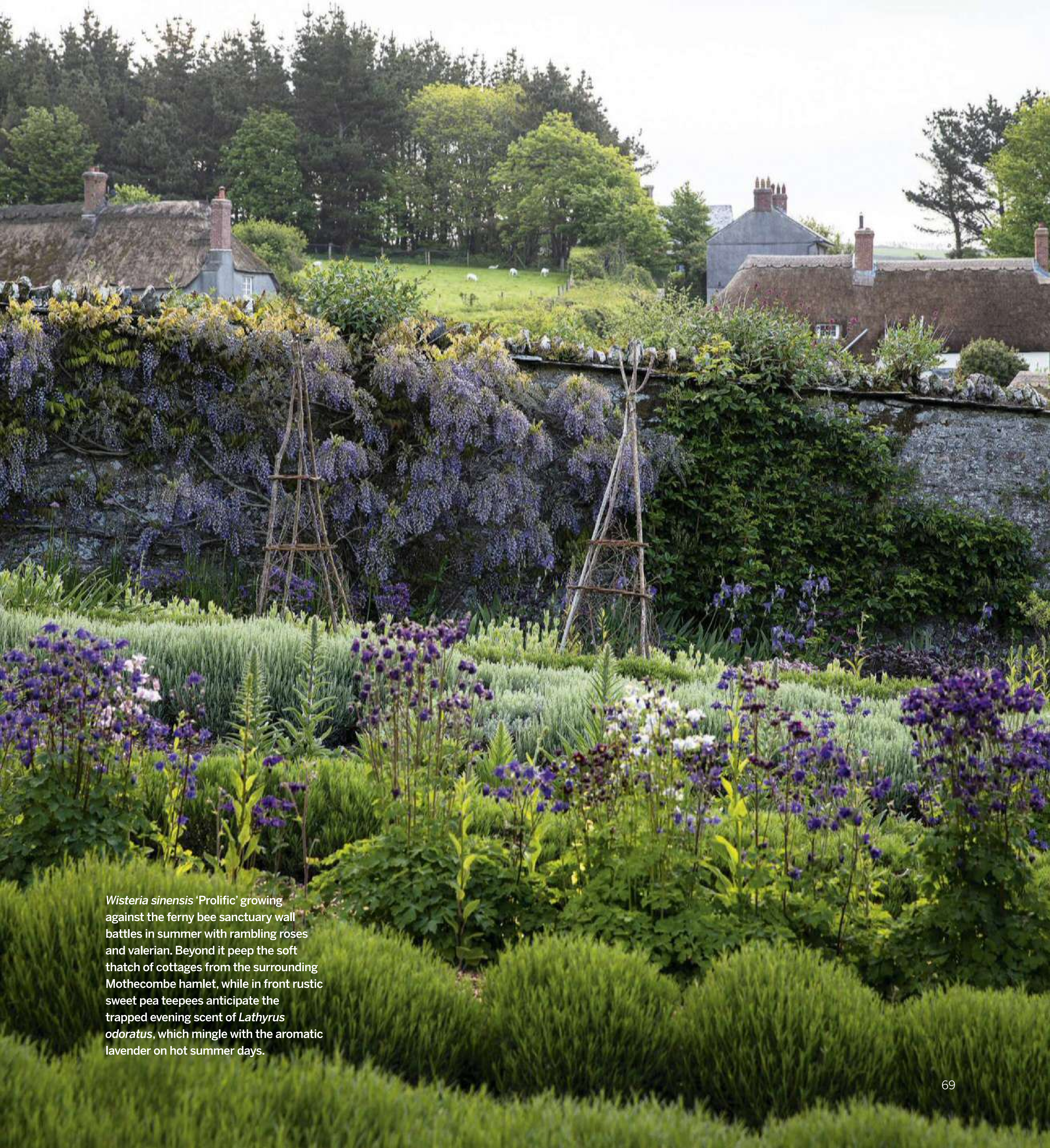
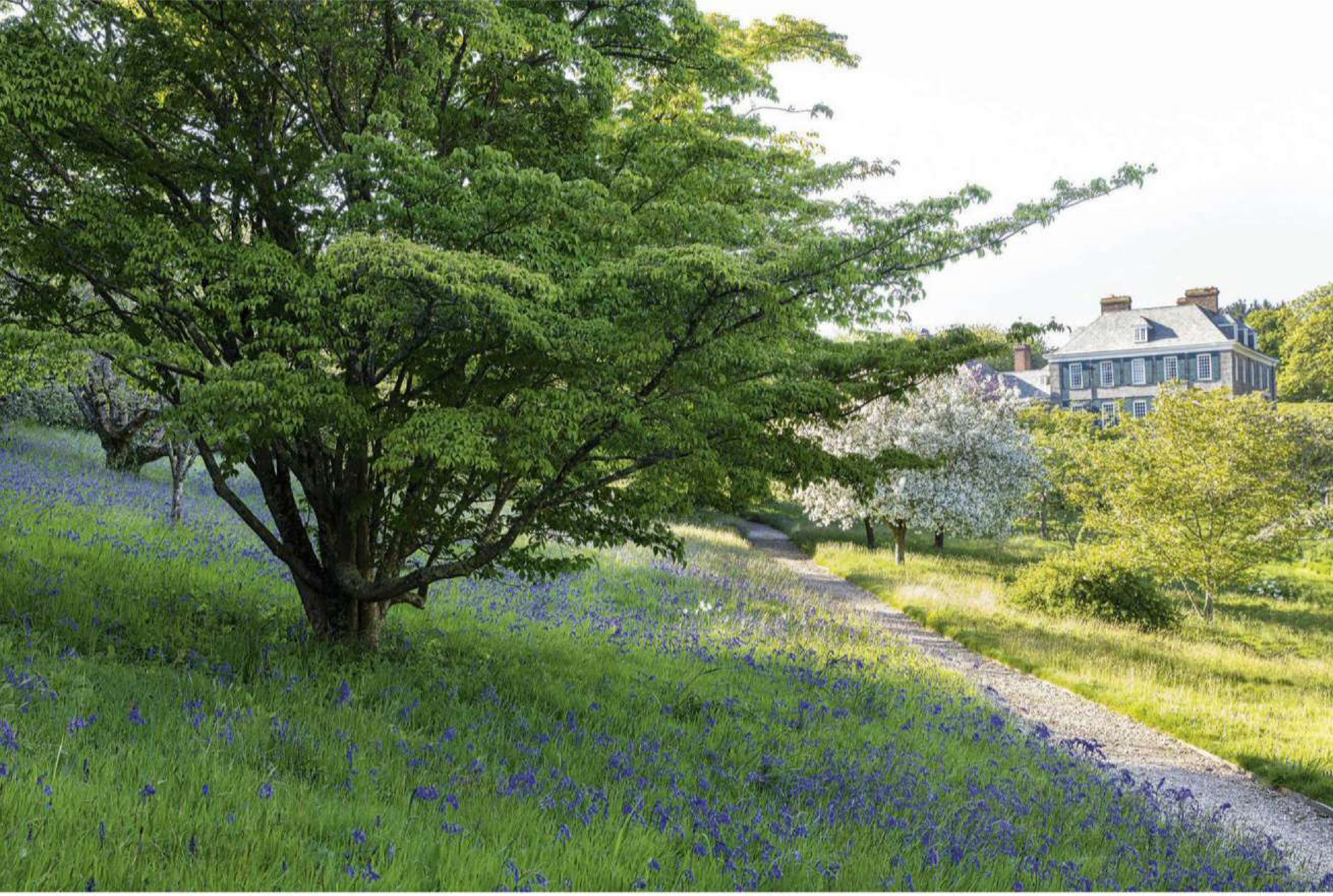
One walled garden has been turned into a bee haven, filled with 18 different sorts of lavender



Wisteria sinensis 'Prolific' growing against the ferny bee sanctuary wall battles in summer with rambling roses and valerian. Beyond it peep the soft thatch of cottages from the surrounding Mothecombe hamlet, while in front rustic sweet pea teepees anticipate the trapped evening scent of *Lathyrus odoratus*, which mingle with the aromatic lavender on hot summer days.



▷ to Anne in 1985 from the Russell Page water gardens at Flete, it wanders down through the orchard with spring bulbs and flowering magnolias. There are the excellent late-flowering magnolias planted 20 years ago: *Magnolia* Felix Jury (= 'Jurmag2'); *M.* 'Star Wars'; *M.* 'Heaven Scent' and *M.* x *loebneri* 'Leonard Messel'; and, direct from China, the yellow *M. denudata* Yellow River (= 'Fei Huang') above the bog garden. Then there are the wonderful camellias – *Camellia japonica* 'Sensation' and several *C.* x *williamsii* cultivars: 'Donation', 'Anticipation' and 'Celebration' – gifts from Sir John Carew Pole of Antony House in Cornwall.

In the orchard an older *Magnolia campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata* and *M.* x *soulangeana* keep company with a huge Judas tree, covered in crystallised pink sugar, and beneath it blowing in the sea breeze are *Narcissus poeticus* always the last to flower. Here a large hole has been dug out, revealing a complicated system of clay pipes. Anne is exploring and restoring the complex web of lost drainage systems that were, and are, vital to a garden oozing with springs and streams. She takes us on down the broad Duchess Walk, the slopes rippled with bluebells and primroses. Above us the autumn garden was made after the storm with several acers, including *Acer griseum*, *A. capillipes, A. davidii* 'Serpentine' and *A. rufinerve*, mixed with a selection of dogwoods, including *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* 'China Girl', *C.* 'Eddie's White Wonder' and *C.* 'Norman Hadden'. The azaleas and rhododendrons, including *Rhododendron sinogrande*, *R. macabeanum, R.* 'Mrs Lionel de Rothschild'; *R.* 'Chevalier Félix de Sauvage', and the deliciously scented *R.* 'Loderi King George', reek exotically.

Following the brook back up the hill one passes pools of *Zantedeschia* and *Gunnera* forests, through groves of cultivars of *Hydrangea paniculata* – 'Grandiflora', 'Kyushu', 'Tardiva' and 'Limelight' – finally arriving back to the walled garden where white-fleshed peaches and pelargoniums are protected in the sunken greenhouse in winter. Espaliered fruit against the walls, bearing the thickest fur coats of moss that I have ever seen. The lavender beds run in downhill. These and the towering echiums, *Eucryphia* x *nymansensis* 'Nymansay' and hebes will be full with harvesting bees in August, but for now they make do with wisteria, dancing columbines, alliums, sages, thymes, foxgloves and fruit blossom. Mothecombe is old England at its merriest. ☐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Mothecombe House, Holbeton, Devon PL8 1JZ. **Tel** 01752-830234. **Web** flete.co.uk
Open Tuesdays, 10am-4pm, 1 April to 30 September. Admission £6.

Above A mature dogwood, *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*, about to pop with white bracts, hovers over a mist of bluebells in long grass. Behind, a *Malus* x *floribunda* fills the air with blossom and blossom smell, surrounded by earlier flowering magnolias in the orchard by the Duchess Walk.

Right above *Iris sibirica* and *Rodgersia* flank the stream amid the electric green meadow under the dominion of a massive *Magnolia campbellii* subsp. *mollicomata,* its handsome leaves helping to filter the sunlight.

Right below In this sheltered valley, noble magnolias and shocking pink rhododendrons are lush with new leaf and flower. At their feet a flowery mead springs all about with bluebells and campion. Steep banked the brook breaks through this sweet veldt and dawdles where the gunneras congregate.

A brook, bordered by *Iris sibirica* wanders down through the orchard with spring bulbs and flowering magnolias

HORTICULTURAL WHO’S WHO

RICHARD SCOTT

The director of the National Wildflower Centre on helping bring nature into the city, the importance of raising people’s aspirations and helping them to engage more with nature

WORDS **STEPHANIE MAHON** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

Richard Scott calls what he does creative conservation. “Some people think that’s an oxymoron,” he says. “It’s a mix of deep science and wonderful art, and it’s about what you can do with very low resources.”

His work under the banner of the National Wildflower Centre comprises colourful and awe-inspiring sown wildflower meadows and swathes of cornfield annuals in urban settings. Each summer, they can be seen blooming all over the country, but particularly in the towns and cities of the “Northern Flower House” around Liverpool, where the organisation was formerly based.

Richard grew up in Lincolnshire, where his parents encouraged a love of the natural world. “My mum used to take us to the country lanes and woods where she had picked violets as a child, and to cowslip meadows where you would never see another person.”

After graduating in Ecology and Geography in the early 1990s, he worked on publications for Natural England, before finding his dream job with Landlife, a pioneering charity founded in 1975 to help bring nature into the city. “It was one of the first urban wildlife organisations in the UK, bringing nature and people together. At that time, you couldn’t buy wild plants, so it was also one the earliest producers of wildflower plants and seeds in the country.”

> IF SEEING IS BELIEVING, YOU HAVE TO MAKE PEOPLE SEE WHAT’S POSSIBLE

His new role was exciting, but challenging. “I remember being told we’d done serious damage sowing wildflowers on the fringe of Kirkby. They’d say ‘People don’t want this’, or ‘They’ll trash it’. In my experience, that’s not true. We’ve delivered wildflowers in lots of places, and they’ve been completely respected.”

The National Wildflower Centre was created as a Landlife project in the run up to the Millennium. “We were aware we needed a centre to bring people to see something,” Richard explains. “I got the idea from my National Trust travel fellowship visiting the National Wildflower Research Center in Texas. It was founded in the 1980s by [former first lady] ‘Lady Bird’ Johnson, with a view to bring wildflowers into public landscapes.” They set up shop in Merseyside at Court Hey Park, Knowsley, with a display garden and new visitor centre. It functioned for more than 15 years as an attraction, educational facility, events venue and community hub in one of the poorest boroughs of the country. “Sometimes people would walk into the centre, and ask what there was to look at. I would walk around with them, and point things out, and then they would become really fascinated, converts. It’s teaching people to look at the world in a different way, at what’s around you in your surroundings, and wildflowers are the perfect catalyst for that.”

Sadly, that incarnation of the centre, and Landlife, closed in 2017. Richard alone has carried on its legacy, and tries to be philosophical – “It was always about people, and not a building” – but it’s obvious the loss was difficult and painful. This is not just a job to Richard, but a true calling or vocation, his life’s work and consuming passion, and it’s clear that it was never an option for him to just walk away.

And so he and the National Wildflower Centre, in a new guise, continue to do wonderful work, including beautiful displays at the Eden Project in Cornwall, where it has found a new home. “We couldn’t have gone on without Eden’s huge generosity, belief and encouragement,” Richard explains. He resists any attempt to define what he does as consultancy, though admits he gives plenty of advice to local authorities. “It’s about raising people’s aspirations, sharing ideas. People are still making really bad mistakes, on road verges especially. They spread topsoil rife with weeds over large stretches, and say they’ll do the most incredible biodiversity net gain projects, and sow a wildflower mix – but five years down the line, it’s solid grass.”

His work is not just about creation, he stresses, but also nature recovery, “highlighting what we’ve got and treating it well. All we seem to be doing now is logging decline, and we need to reverse that scenario,” he says. “We don’t always have to create plantings – we just have to get the management right. The pandemic has also made people aware of the value of parks.”

In our increasingly urbanised world, it’s about what can be done where people live, to get them to engage with nature. “People aren’t connected with the landscape like before. So it’s our duty to show what’s possible – if seeing is believing, you have to make people see.”

To this end on some projects Richard organises meadow-sowing events where people of all ages and backgrounds help broadcast seed by hand in an atmosphere of celebration, with music and performance art. “I love to see people’s delight and surprise about the miracle of seed growing into a meadow, because often they don’t really believe it’s going to work. These things are important conservation and conversation openers,” he says. “It’s all about joy and enrichment – if you haven’t got joy, you’re selling people short.”

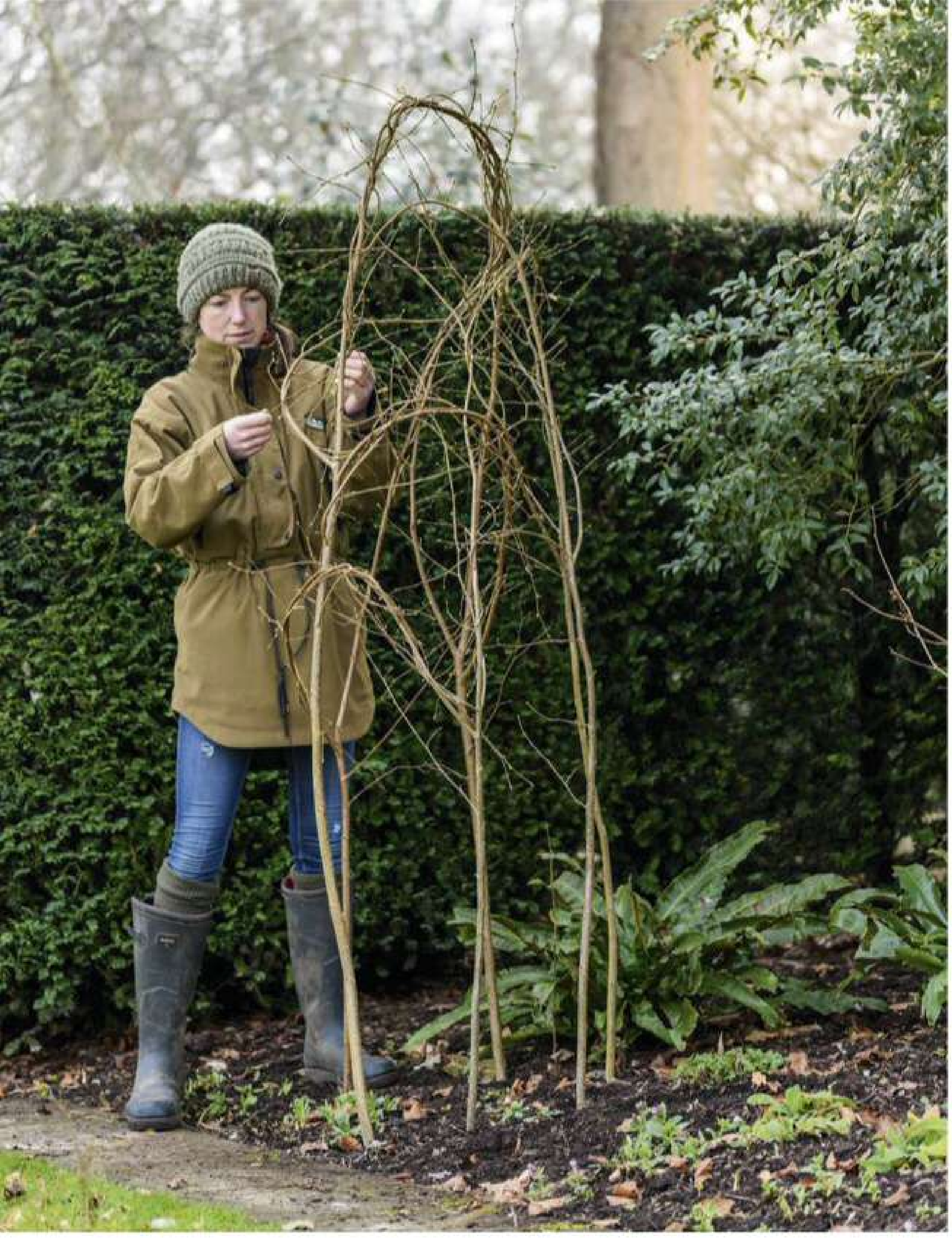
USEFUL INFORMATION

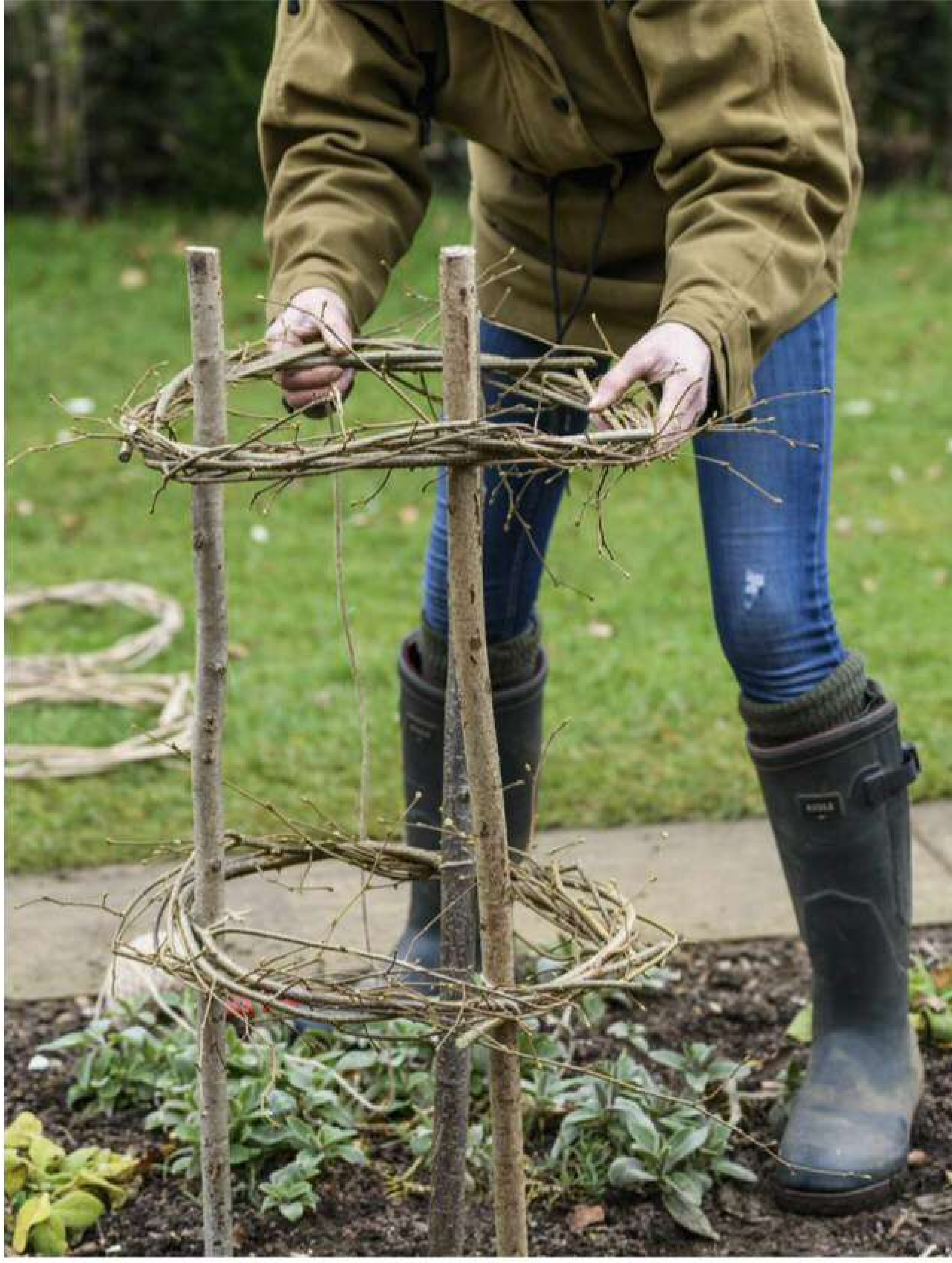
Find out more about The National Wildflower Centre at edenproject.com/eden-story/our-ethos/national-wildflower-centre

Supporting roles

Plant supports are essential for climbers and tall plants that have a tendency to flop. But they will also help save space in your borders and encourage good air circulation, which prevents some pests and diseases, and makes for healthier, stronger plants – and now is the perfect time to make your own

WORDS **JENNY BARNES** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**





Twisted hazel

Traditionally, coppiced hazel has been widely used in both ornamental and vegetable gardens. It is especially useful for staking a wide range of herbaceous plants. Twisted basket structures are easy and quick to construct and can be built to any size to meet an individual plant's requirements. Hazel is naturally twiggy and the multi-branched stems provide plenty of support for new growth to grow through. The posts can be pushed directly into the ground as hazel is unlikely to root. Although beautiful in their own right, the structures rapidly become engulfed in leaf and blend seamlessly into a border.

How to make

Staking herbaceous plants is easier in the spring when you can see the new growth appearing, but it's imperative that you provide support before the plant actually needs it; it's virtually impossible to build a structure discreetly over an established plant without damaging it. It is helpful to know the eventual height of the plant you are staking as this will dictate the size of your structure, which should be roughly the height of the plant when fully grown. Using an iron bar and hammer, make between four and six holes in the ground in a circle around the plant. Gather a large armful of hazel stakes, then take the hazel stems and push into these the holes. Bend the tops of the poles toward the centre of the plant and twist them together. Work around the circle, interlinking all of the twiggy branches. Keep twisting the stems together until you have a secure dome over your plant. Woven hazel structures can provide discreet support in any mixed border, smothered in annual climbers such as sweet peas (left), cobaea or ipomoea. They are also an attractive addition to the kitchen garden for the less weighty vegetables such as peas or French beans.

Tubular

Some plants require more support than others. Larger, taller plants and often those with vertical flower spikes, such as delphiniums and aconitums, are prone to damage from the wind and so a strong stake or two is often required. This style of structure is also useful in the kitchen garden and I've used it successfully to support both tomatoes and cut flowers. There is no limit to the size of these tubular structures, and I make sure to construct them to at least three quarters the height of the plant. The example given here is made from hazel, but there are many other options. Willow, cornus, wisteria or lengths of old man's beard clematis can be twisted into hoops. I use whatever I have to hand and it's a great way to recycle otherwise wasted pruning material.

How to make

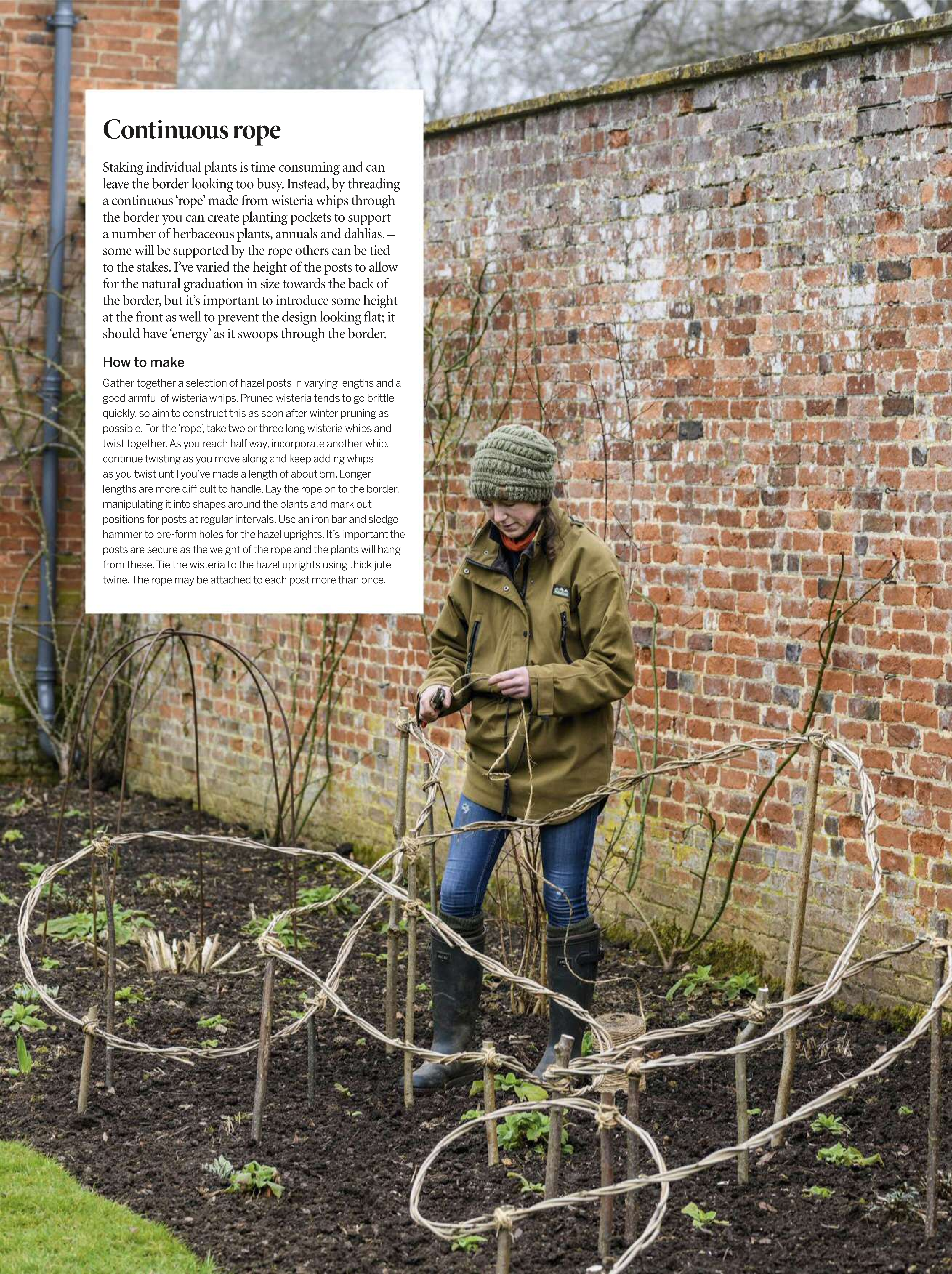
Based on the eventual height of the plant you are supporting, cut three hazel poles to length. Aim for between half and three quarters the height of the plant plus 20cm to push into the ground. With an iron bar and hammer make three holes in a circle around the plant ensuring they are far enough away to avoid damaging any roots. Push your hazel posts into the holes and firm. Take your flexible plant material and form a wreath that will fit snugly over all three hazel poles. Start with one stem and coil it around, wrapping the end over and through the centre to hold it tight. Add further stems until you have a strong, sturdy hoop. Slide the ring over the poles and secure to the hazel with jute twine. Depending on the height of the structure, more than one ring will be necessary. I space them at around 30cm intervals, finishing with a final hoop just a few centimetres from the top of the post.

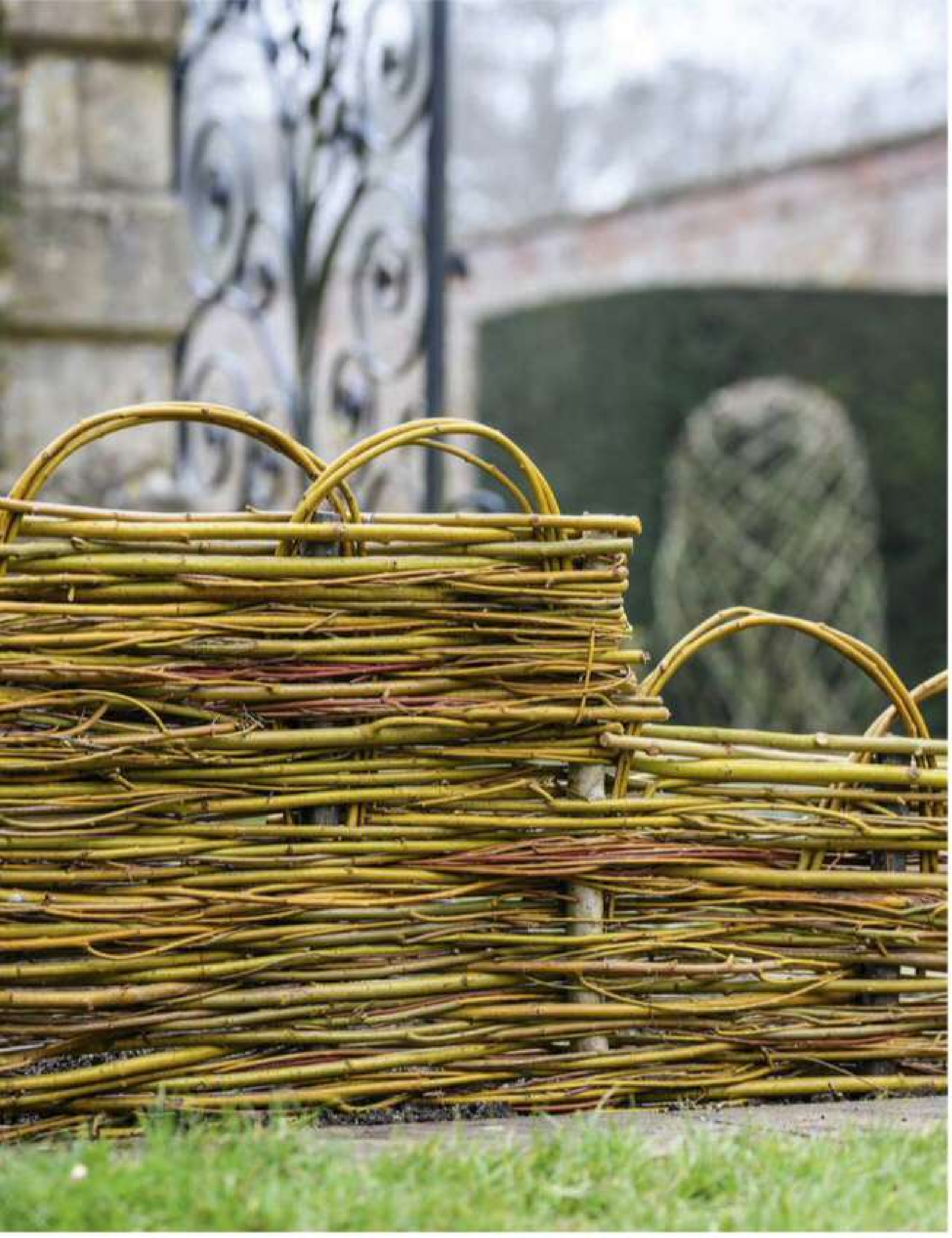
Continuous rope

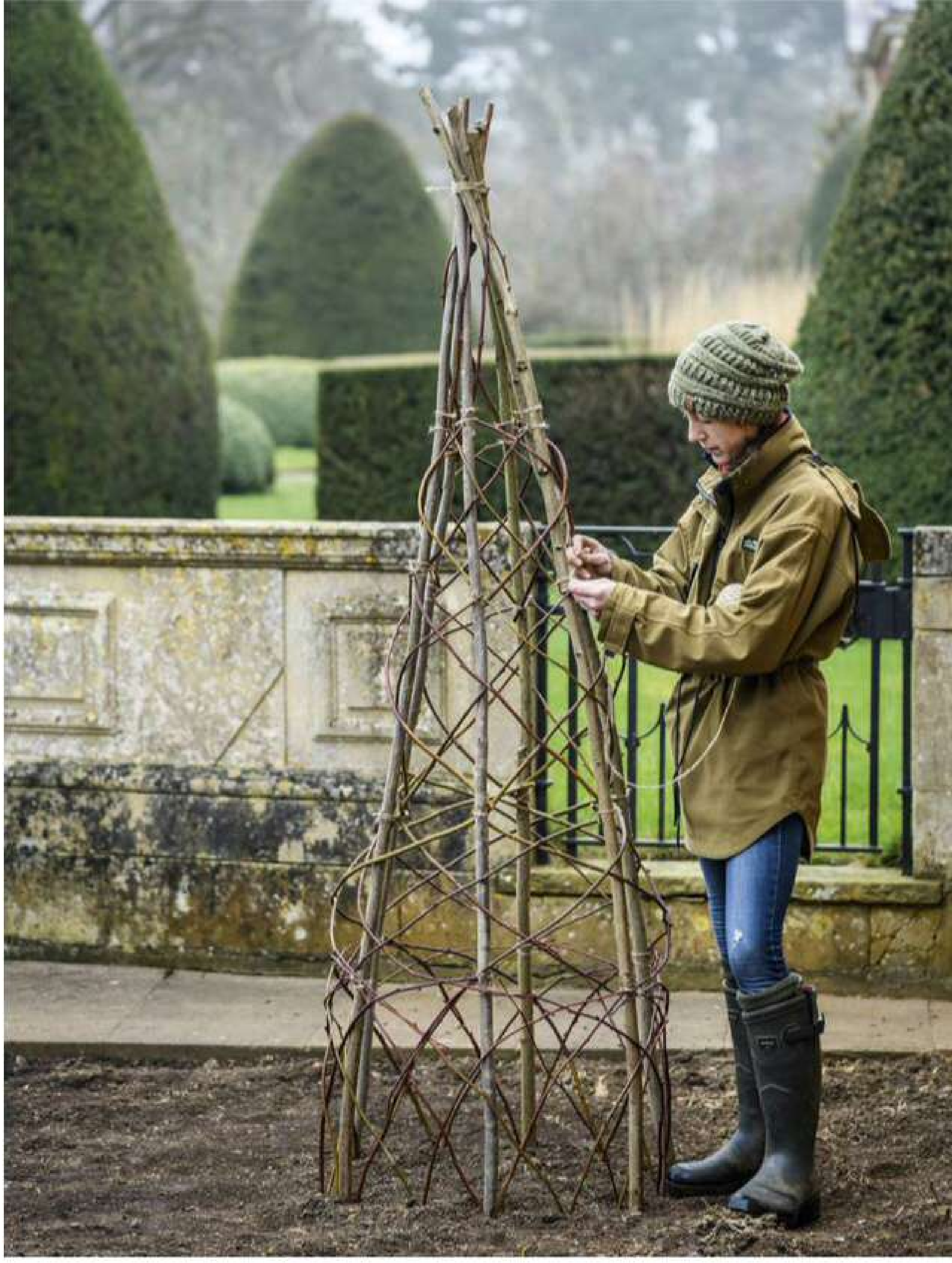
Staking individual plants is time consuming and can leave the border looking too busy. Instead, by threading a continuous 'rope' made from wisteria whips through the border you can create planting pockets to support a number of herbaceous plants, annuals and dahlias. – some will be supported by the rope others can be tied to the stakes. I've varied the height of the posts to allow for the natural graduation in size towards the back of the border, but it's important to introduce some height at the front as well to prevent the design looking flat; it should have 'energy' as it swoops through the border.

How to make

Gather together a selection of hazel posts in varying lengths and a good armful of wisteria whips. Pruned wisteria tends to go brittle quickly, so aim to construct this as soon after winter pruning as possible. For the 'rope', take two or three long wisteria whips and twist together. As you reach half way, incorporate another whip, continue twisting as you move along and keep adding whips as you twist until you've made a length of about 5m. Longer lengths are more difficult to handle. Lay the rope on to the border, manipulating it into shapes around the plants and mark out positions for posts at regular intervals. Use an iron bar and sledge hammer to pre-form holes for the hazel uprights. It's important the posts are secure as the weight of the rope and the plants will hang from these. Tie the wisteria to the hazel uprights using thick jute twine. The rope may be attached to each post more than once.







Willow hurdle

Traditionally used in medieval gardens, wattle fences were commonly used to define boundaries to property and land. I often create woven panels from a combination of willow and hazel. Incredibly versatile, these panels can be made as large or as small as is necessary and can be embellished with hoops and rolled tops or left simply unadorned. Different varieties of willow also offer an impressive range of colours from green, through yellow, orange and red to black. I weave ankle-high panels as edging to borders to retain wayward plants where they must be kept off lawns or away from paths. They also work brilliantly in the vegetable garden to divide crops, retain mulch or act as unobtrusive fences to keep pests away from precious harvests.

How to make

Willow is quick to root if placed directly into the ground when fresh, so allow the cut rods to sit outside in a frost first. I favour hazel for the upright posts, selecting poles that are stronger and thicker than the willow I'll be weaving with. I create these structures in situ, pushing the posts into the ground at regular 20cm intervals, ensuring they are well anchored. Select pliable willow rods that are at least as long as the panel you're creating. Starting at one end of the hurdle, weave the willow rod backwards and forwards through the hazel uprights. If you reach the last post, wrap the willow around 180 degrees and continue weaving in the opposite direction. Alternate the direction of the weave as you add more rods. When you are happy with the height of the panel, finish by weaving two strong, slightly thicker willow rods along the top, one in each direction. Depending on its setting, I may soften the edges of the hurdle by adding a row of small hoops to the top edge. Twist together two or three slim willow weavers and insert the ends into the holes either side of the hazel uprights interlinking them as you move along the length of the panel.

Wigwam

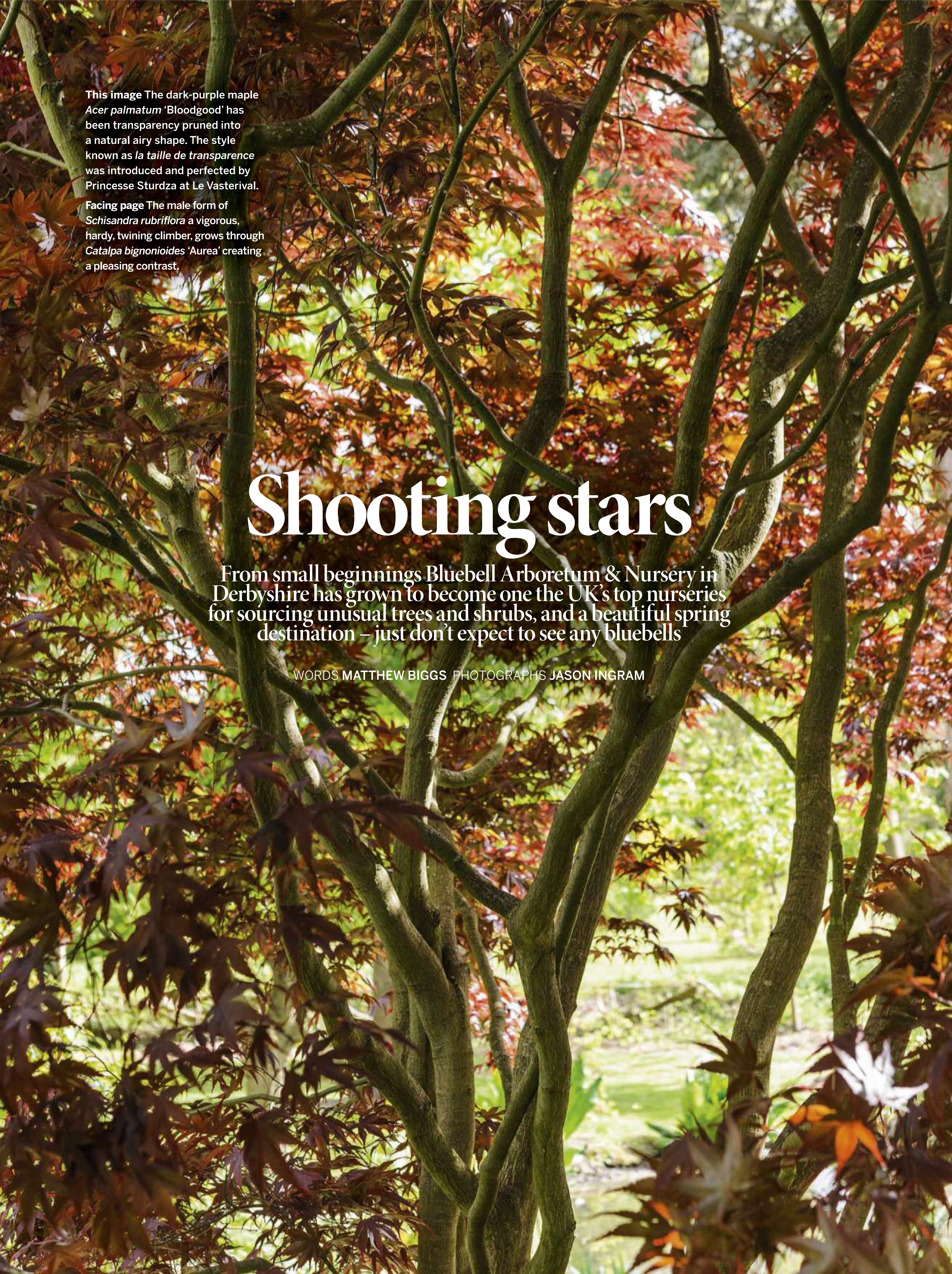
Undulations in height give an extra dimension to borders and add interest to planting schemes. An easy, way to achieve this is by using climbers. Hazel wigwams have traditionally been used to support both vegetable and ornamental climbing plants. They're easy to construct and can be as rustic or decorative as desired. The base of my wigwams are always sturdy hazel poles, but I use a wide range of plant material to decorate with. Any pliable offcuts from trees and shrubs such as apple, willow and lime can be gathered while pruning and used to create patterns and shapes within the hazel structure. These decorative embellishments also provide extra support for plants to scramble through, reducing the need for so much tying in.

How to make

Established climbers in full leaf can be exceptionally heavy and it's important that the structure can support the weight throughout the summer months. Select five or six strong, straight hazel poles and cut to the desired height allowing an extra 20cm to push into the ground. Trim off any side shoots. To ensure the wigwam is well anchored, I prepare the holes for the hazel to slot into beforehand, using an iron bar and a sledge hammer. Working in a circle, I then push the hazel firmly into the pre-prepared holes. Gather together the tops and tie securely, I like to use a chunky, rustic jute twine. Starting at the bottom of the wigwam, weave your chosen plant material around the hazel poles to create pattern and interest. You could opt for multiple different stems, such as a red cornus and a yellow willow to add additional colour to the structure. Tie the stems to the hazel poles where necessary using jute twine. It is important to ensure the pattern is dense toward the base of the wigwam to provide lots of support for new growth as it begins to climb.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Jenny Barnes is head gardener at Cottesbrooke Hall & Gardens. **Address** Cottesbrooke, Hall, Northampton NN6 8PF. **Tel** 01604 505808. **Web** cottesbrooke.co.uk
Open 5 May to 30 September, Wednesday and Thursday (Thursday only, July to September) and Bank Holiday Mondays (May to September), 2-5.30pm. Admission £10.



This image The dark-purple maple *Acer palmatum* 'Bloodgood' has been transparency pruned into a natural airy shape. The style known as *la taille de transparence* was introduced and perfected by Princesse Sturdza at Le Vasterival.

Facing page The male form of *Schisandra rubriflora* a vigorous, hardy, twining climber, grows through *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea' creating a pleasing contrast.

Shooting stars

From small beginnings Bluebell Arboretum & Nursery in Derbyshire has grown to become one the UK's top nurseries for sourcing unusual trees and shrubs, and a beautiful spring destination – just don't expect to see any bluebells

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

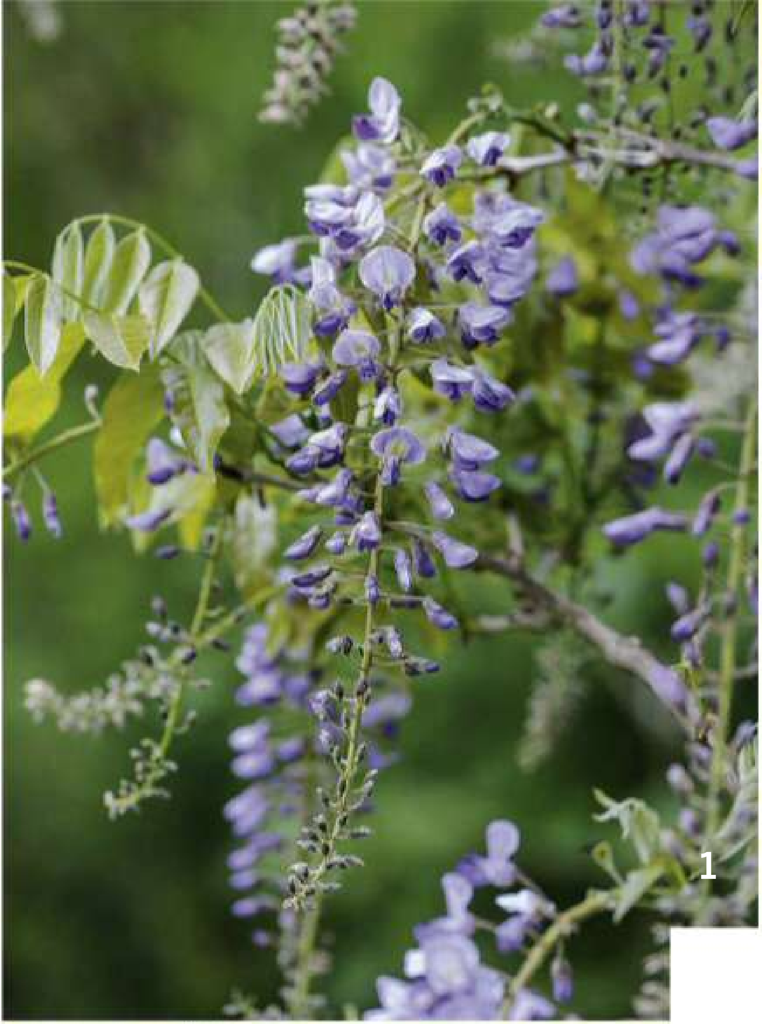
Spring sunlight illuminates the foliage of *Acer palmatum* 'Seiryu' a vigorous maple with attractive light green foliage. *Gleditsia triacanthos* 'Ruby Lace' and *Acer campestre* 'Carnival' will soon add claret and creamy-white to the display.

Bluebell Arboretum & Nursery is a 'go to' location for anyone seeking choice trees and shrubs. Its huge collection includes more than 50 different ornamental cherries, 100 different magnolias, including several reliable yellows such as 'Lois' and 'Daphne', and all 14 RHS Award of Garden Merit wisterias, which twine through trees and shrubs or grow around stout posts. All can be found in the nursery's nine-acre arboretum, which both provides propagation material and demonstrates to visitors how trees and shrubs can create structure and add changing colour through the seasons. Detailed educational labels can transform a ten-minute visit into hours. Even if you're not looking to buy a tree, a spring visit to the garden won't disappoint, unless you come expecting bluebells for those are one spring treat you won't find here.

Instead the name is a reminder of the nursery's first home in an acre of land behind the Bluebell pub in the nearby Leicestershire village of Blackfordby, which was rented by Robert and Suzette Vernon. For several years this enterprising pair of horticulturists had been supplying local garden centres with alpines grown in their garden but as their business expanded, they were able to make the nursery a full-time concern. Robert was also able to grow more of the 'woody' plants that had been his passion since as a 12-year-old he had been given a flowering cutting of *Camellia japonica* 'Lady Vansittart'. "I couldn't believe a small plant could produce such a large bloom and was instantly hooked," says Robert. Over time the number of 'woody' plants offered by the nursery grew as did its reputation. Roy Lancaster was invited to lecture in the adjacent village hall to publicise the nursery – something that became an annual event for 21 years – and the couple were also helped by the garden journalist Robin Lane Fox who regularly referenced the nursery.

Eventually, in 1992, Robert and Suzette were able to purchase six acres of farmland just over the county border in Derbyshire and set to work creating a nursery on land of their own. They started small – the first trees were two 15cm tall giant redwoods (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*), planted by their sons on 11 March 1992. These were soon joined by a shelter belt of native trees (plus several rare oaks) to create a micro-climate. Over time came more trees and more land.

"We increased our range of trees and shrubs by swapping plants, seeds and grafts and buying from other specialists in Britain, ▷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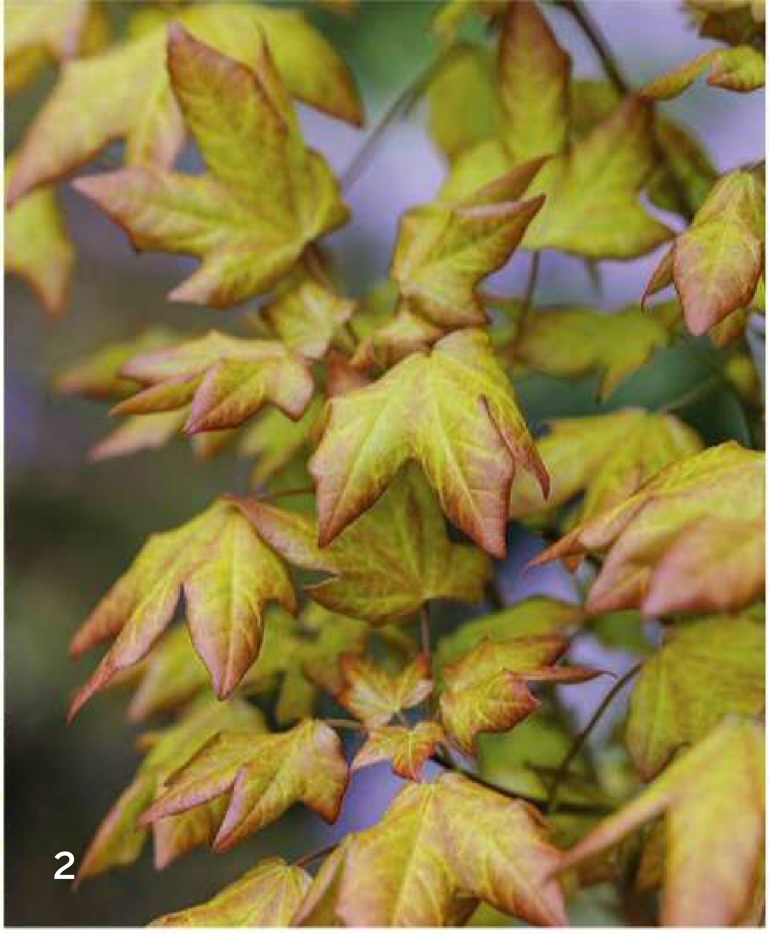
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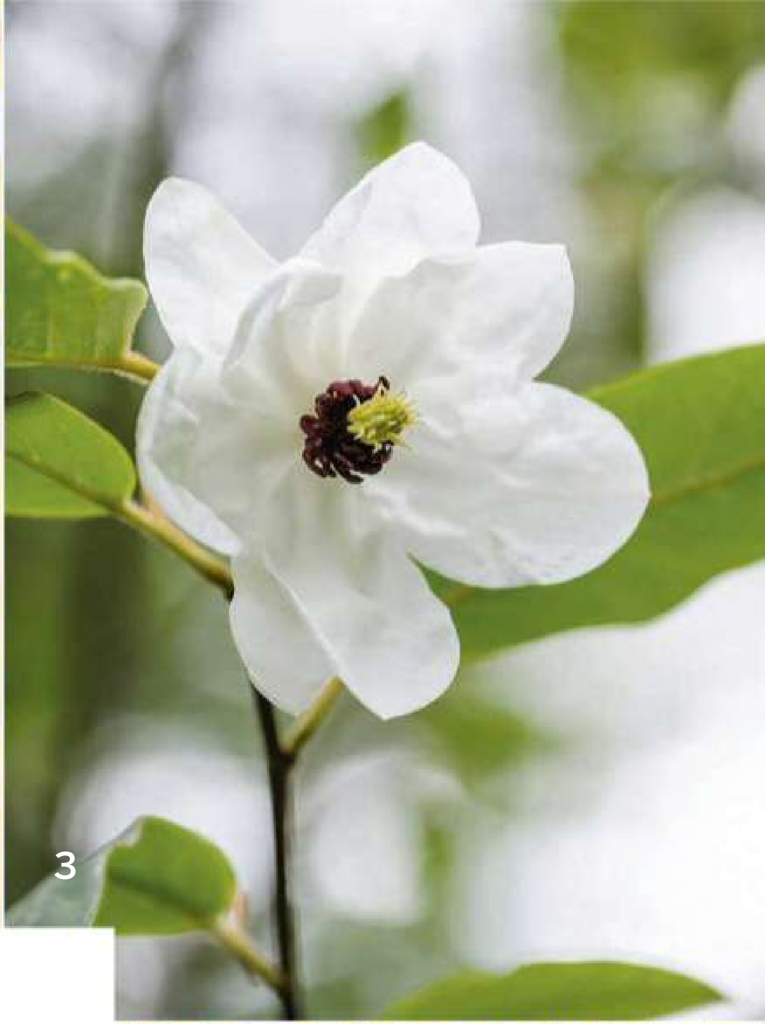
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16 key trees and shrubs

1 ***Wisteria floribunda* f. *multijuga*** An elegant wisteria with flower clusters up to 1m long. Train up a post or pergola so the long flowers have space to hang down; if trained against a wall they can become entangled. Robert grows it through sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). 8m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b[†].

2 ***Acer* Orientalia (= 'Minorient')** A large shrub or small tree, the deeply lobed leaves are golden orange, flushed red in spring, light yellow-green in summer and maroon in autumn. 4m. RHS H7, USDA 6a-9b.

3 ***Magnolia wilsonii*** The pure-white spring flowers, which are lightly nodding, make for easy viewing in May to June. and then are followed by cerise-coloured fruits with metallic orange seeds in late August and September. 8m. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.

4 ***Magnolia* 'Butterflies'** A pretty magnolia with slender creamy yellow tepals, they flower more prolifically and with greater intensity of colour after hot summers. Needs a sunny spot. 7m. USDA 5a-9b.

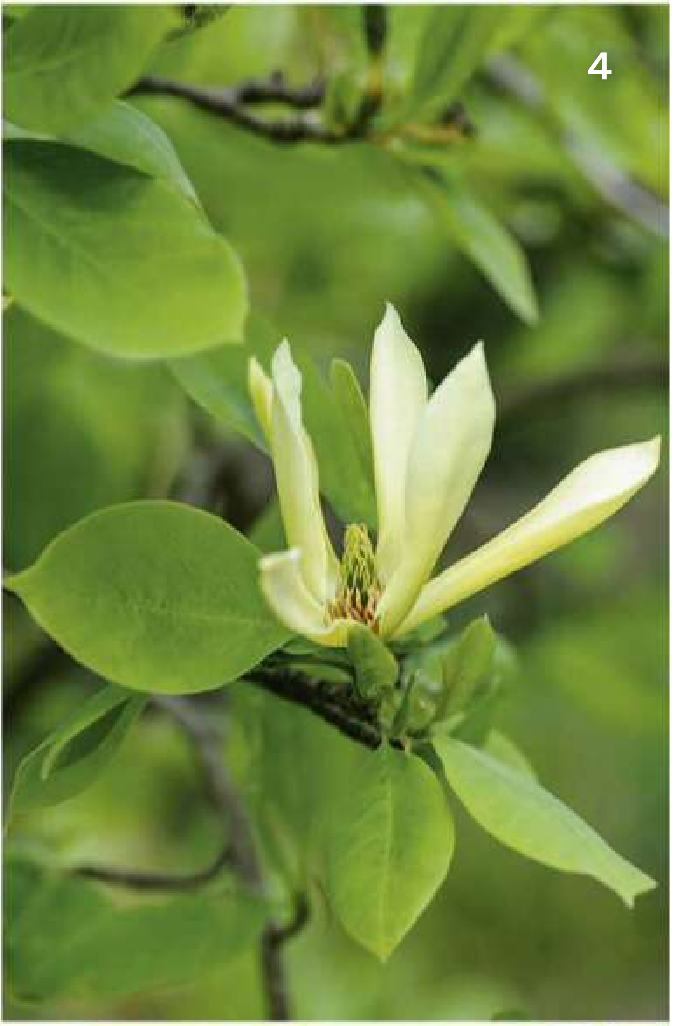
5 ***Carya ovata*** Deep-yellow leaves in spring, which turn rich golden yellow in autumn, creating a brief but brilliant display. A worthwhile indulgence if you have space. 12m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

6 ***Embothrium coccineum*** A choice evergreen shrub or small tree with bright orange-red tubular flowers in spring. They prefer mild, moist climates, and are worth trying in a sheltered garden. 8m. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

7 ***Wisteria brachybotrys* 'Okayama'** The combination of the deep rich violet blue flowers and downy, coppery young foliage is breath-taking. Ideal for growing through a tree or against a wall. 8m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-10b.

8 ***Quercus texana* 'New Madrid'** Copper-coloured spring foliage turns glossy green; a second burst of growth in summer creates a halo of copper around it. Outstanding red autumn colour. 30m. RHS H6.

Turn to page 83 for more key trees and shrubs from Bluebell Arboretum & Nursery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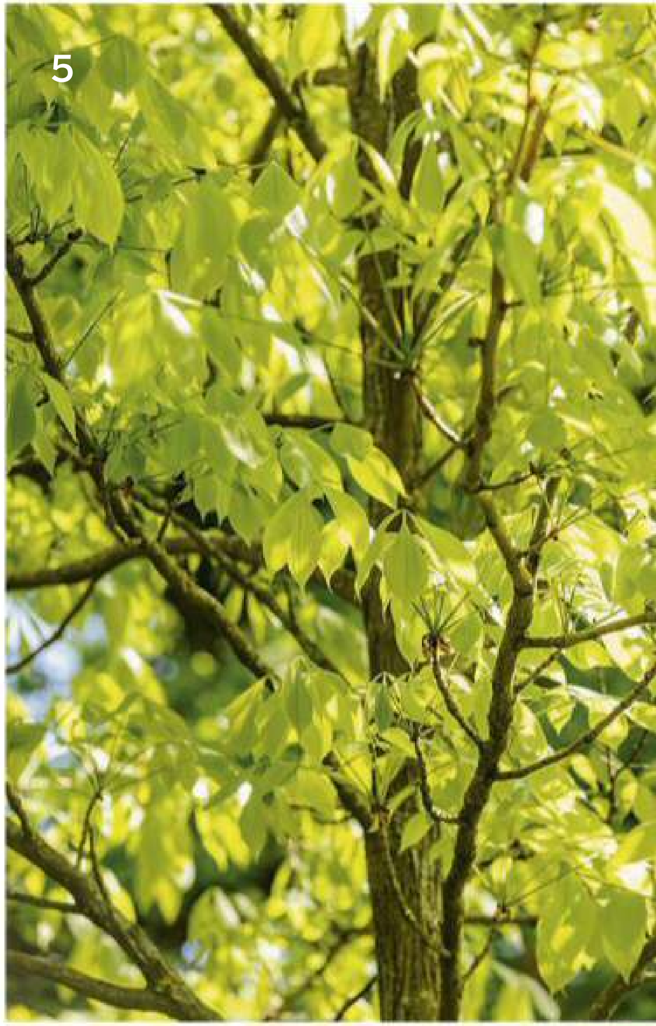
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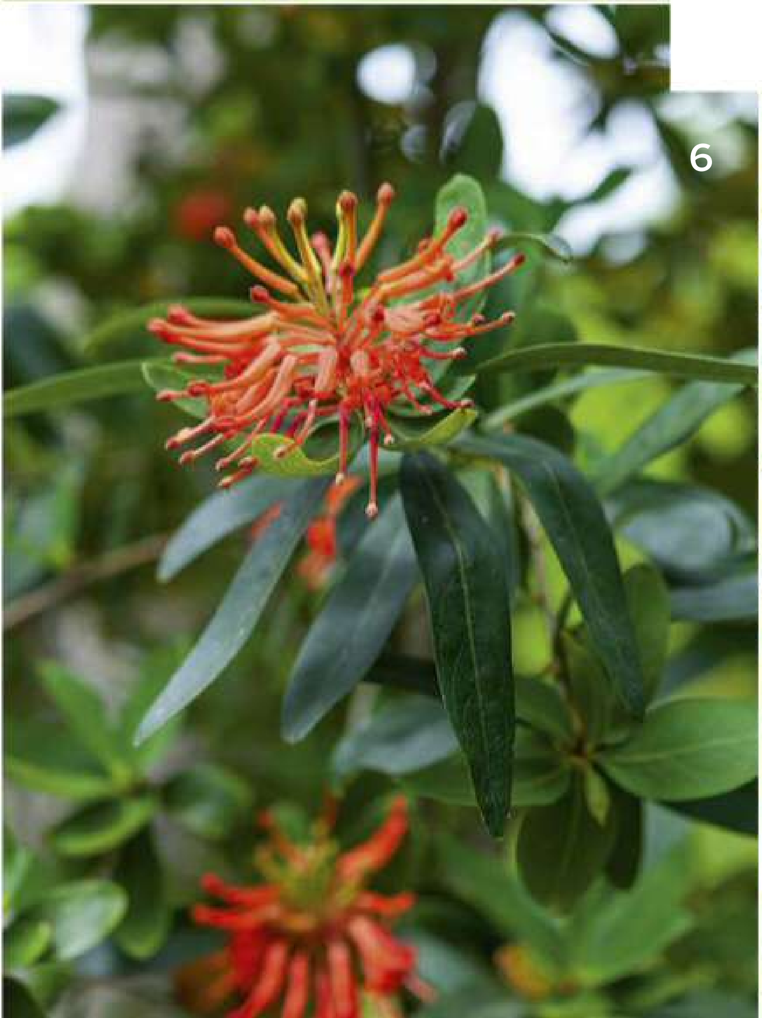
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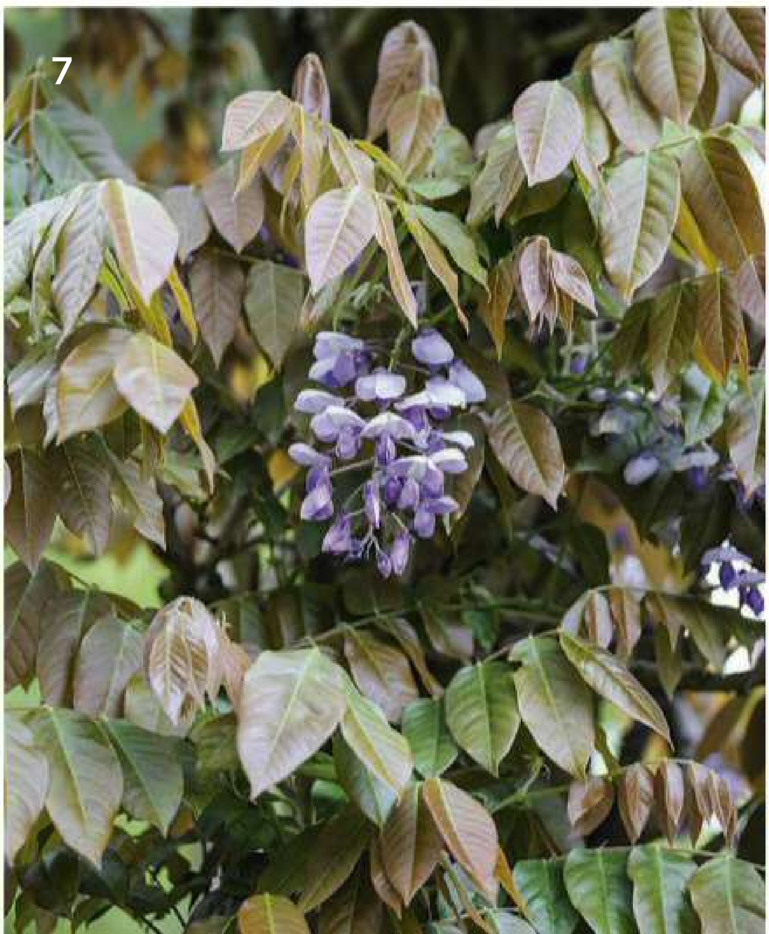
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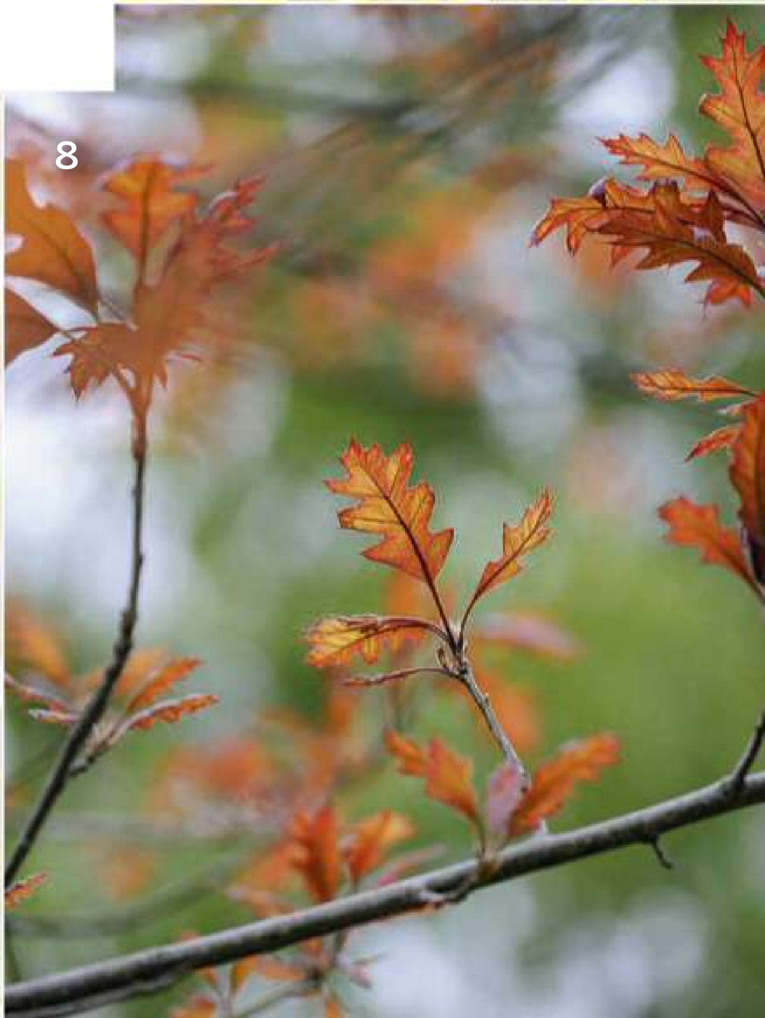
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Visitors to the nursery are welcomed by an array of plants, many at eye level so their flowers and fragrance can be fully appreciated.

▷ Europe and the USA," says Robert who remembers Les Journées des Plantes de Courson near Paris (now relocated to Chantilly) was always "full of exciting treasures".

Their first catalogue was a typed list of 1,400 plants; they now offer around 4,500 different kinds with 1,500 on the website at any one time and new plants constantly being added. "We select interesting cultivars from familiar genera and choice plants that we believe should be more widely known, such as *Magnolia*, *Styrax*, *Halesia* and *Betula*, they are not for instant gratification but it's well worth the wait when they perform."

Planting is often experimental. "In this part of the world planting *Embothrium coccineum* was an accident waiting to happen," says Robert. "We put in five before one grew, but would do it again. When they do deliver, the flowers are spectacular – particularly against a blue sky. They also dislike fertiliser, particularly phosphates and enjoy organic rich acidic soil – ours grows under a Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) on a deep bed of needles."

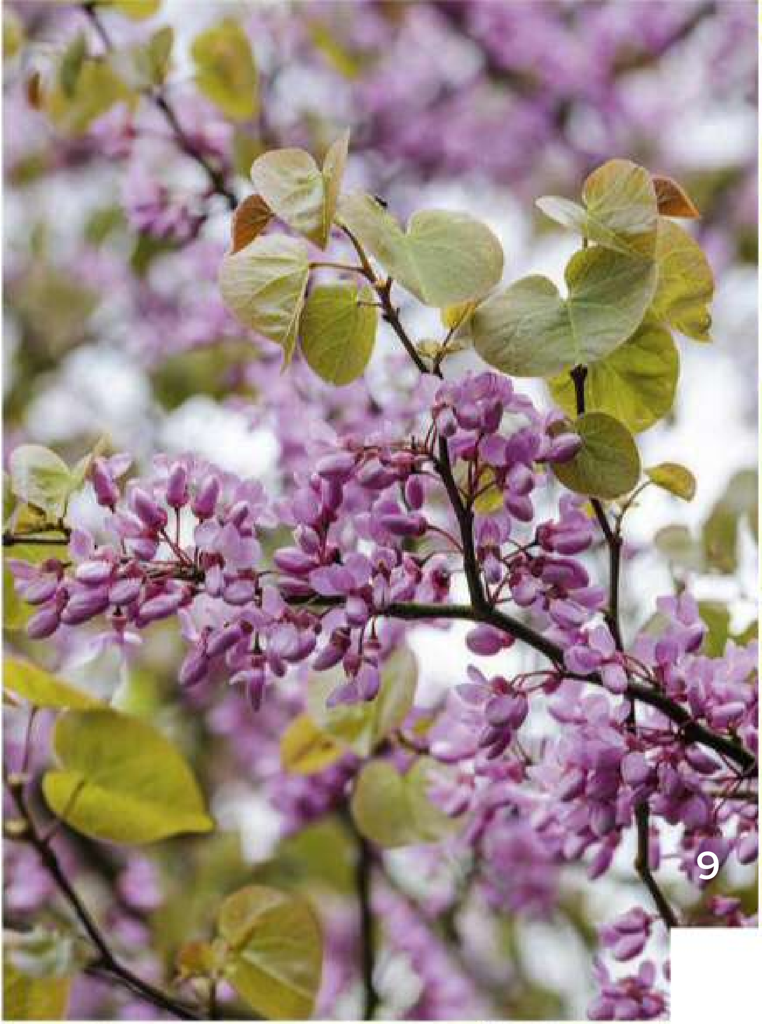
There are also more than 20 different oaks, including *Quercus texana* 'New Madrid'. This exciting recent addition features Lammas growth – the second burst of growth in late June and early July – that in autumn forms a spectacular halo of copper around the tree. "Our soil pH is 6.8," explains Robert, "and autumn colour has been improved dramatically by an annual application of sulphur chips; it takes four to five years to have an impact but it has transformed the red oaks, Japanese maples, cercydiphyllum and liquidamber."

While autumn foliage in the arboretum is spectacular, for Robert it is spring when the garden really comes alive with early shoots, leaves, including the young leaves of *Tilia henryana*, *Acer* 'Minorient' and the "mesmerisingly beautiful" variegated *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Purgatory', and flowers, such as *Cercis chinensis* 'Avondale', which flowers spectacularly through the whole of April.

The arboretum features interesting and unusual plants and the website is full of temptations, but despite the name, everyone at the nursery is focused on searching for the best 'woody' plants they can find – there's no room for bluebells. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Bluebell Arboretum & Nursery, Annwell Lane, Smisby, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Derbyshire LE65 2TA. **Tel** 01530 413700.
Web bluebellnursery.com **Open** March to October, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays in summer, 10.30am-4pm. See website for current and winter opening hours.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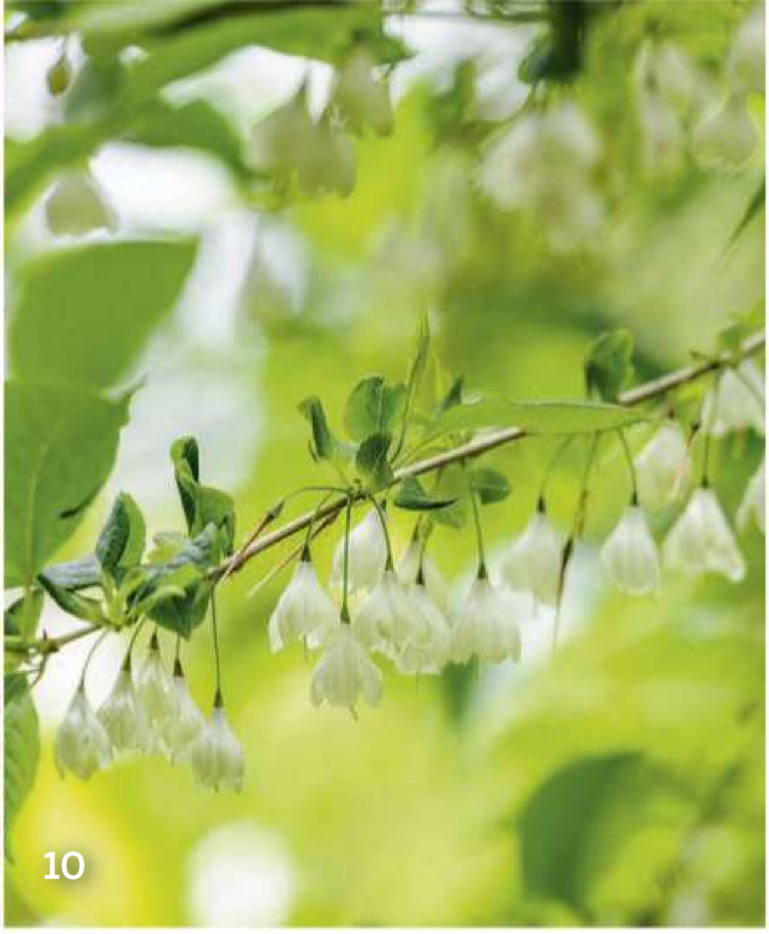
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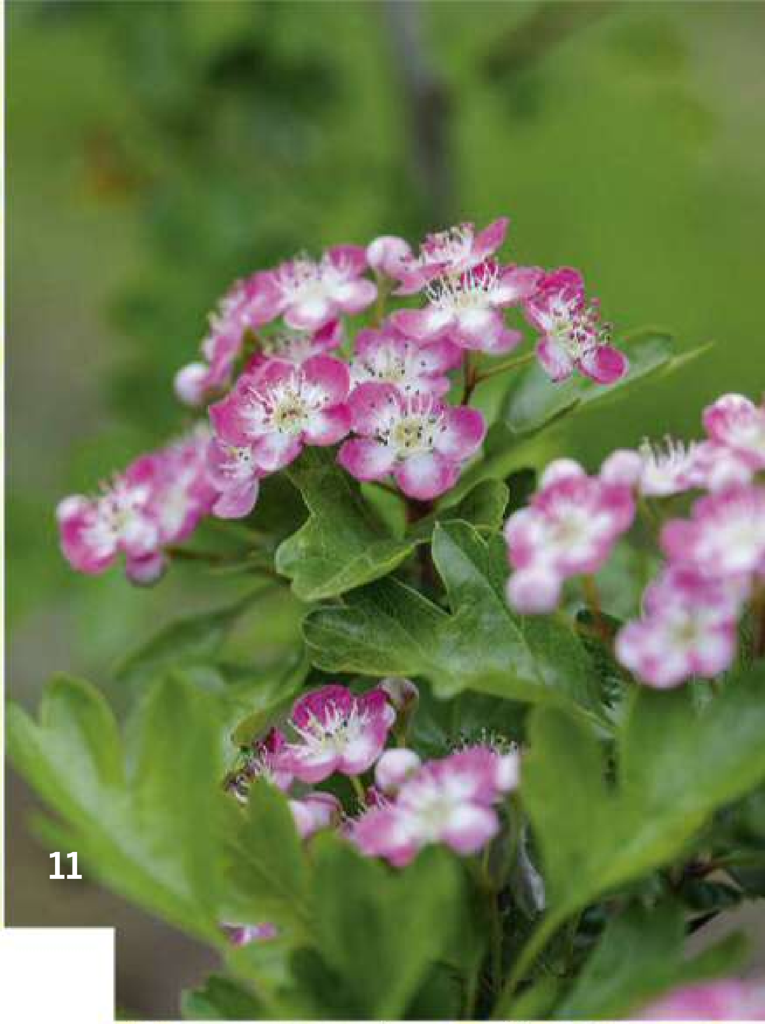
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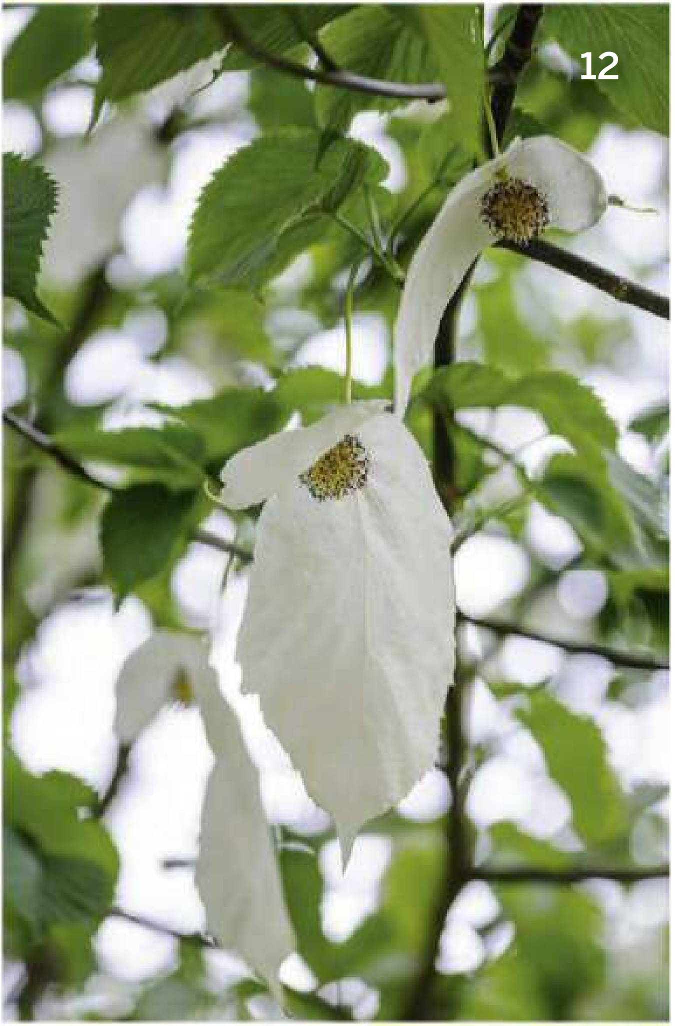
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16 key plants continued

9 ***Cercis chinensis* 'Avondale'** A show stopper that flowers spectacularly throughout April, the purple-pink, pea-like flowers appearing on the trunk and branches. They thrive in organic-rich soil. 4m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.

10 ***Halesia carolina*** A fast-growing, medium-sized tree or multi-stemmed shrub, which in April has flowers that hang like clusters of small, white lampshades along the branches. It has yellow autumn colour and interesting fruits. 12m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

11 ***Crataegus laevigata* 'Princess Sturdza'** Named for the renowned gardener and creator of Le Vasterival garden in France, this hawthorn – which will grow on top of the Cairngorms if needed – has very pretty pink and white flowers. 8m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.

12 ***Davidia involucrata*** A legendary tree whose small, rounded flowerheads are protected by two, white, pendent bracts that flutter in the breeze and look ethereal illuminated by moonlight. 12m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

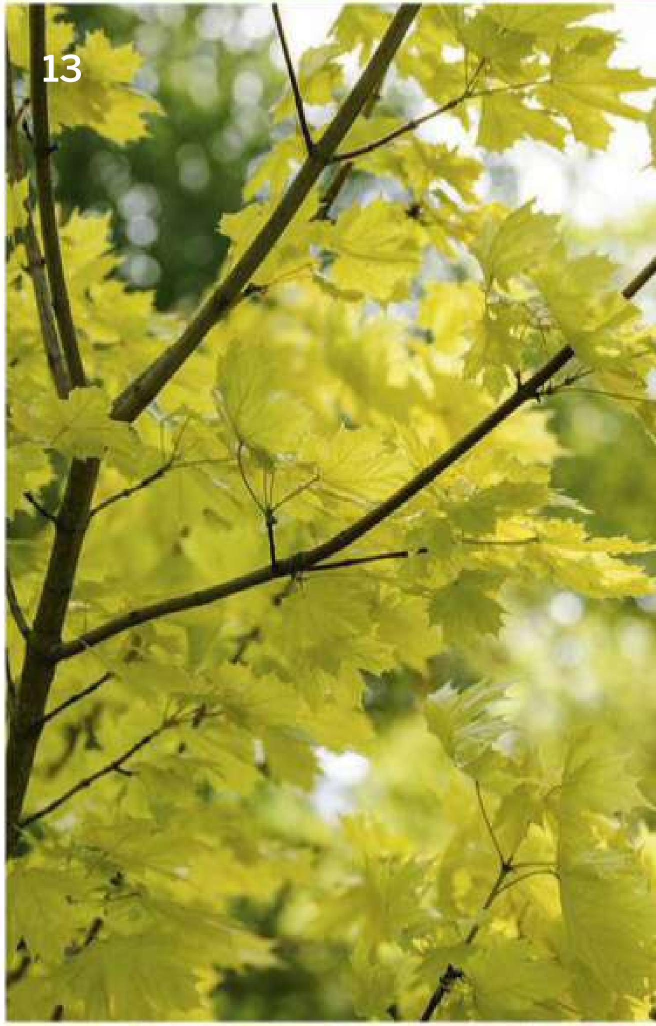
13 ***Acer platanoides* Princeton Gold (= 'Prigo')** A broadly columnar deciduous tree with red leaf petioles and bright, clear-yellow foliage from spring until autumn. This selection should be more widely planted. 12m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.

14 ***Halesia carolina* 'Rosea'** The pale, coppery-coloured buds open to sugar-almond pink, pendent, bell-like flowers, which are followed by handsome winged fruits. 10m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

15 ***Viburnum plicatum* f. *plicatum* 'Popcorn'** A round, horizontally branched shrub, with small, dense clusters of white flowers from mid to late spring. The leaves become red and purple in autumn. 2.5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

16 ***Malus toringo* 'Freja'** A medium-sized tree producing masses of deep-pink flowers; later in the year the leaves turn bronze, orange and red, creating outstanding autumn colour. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.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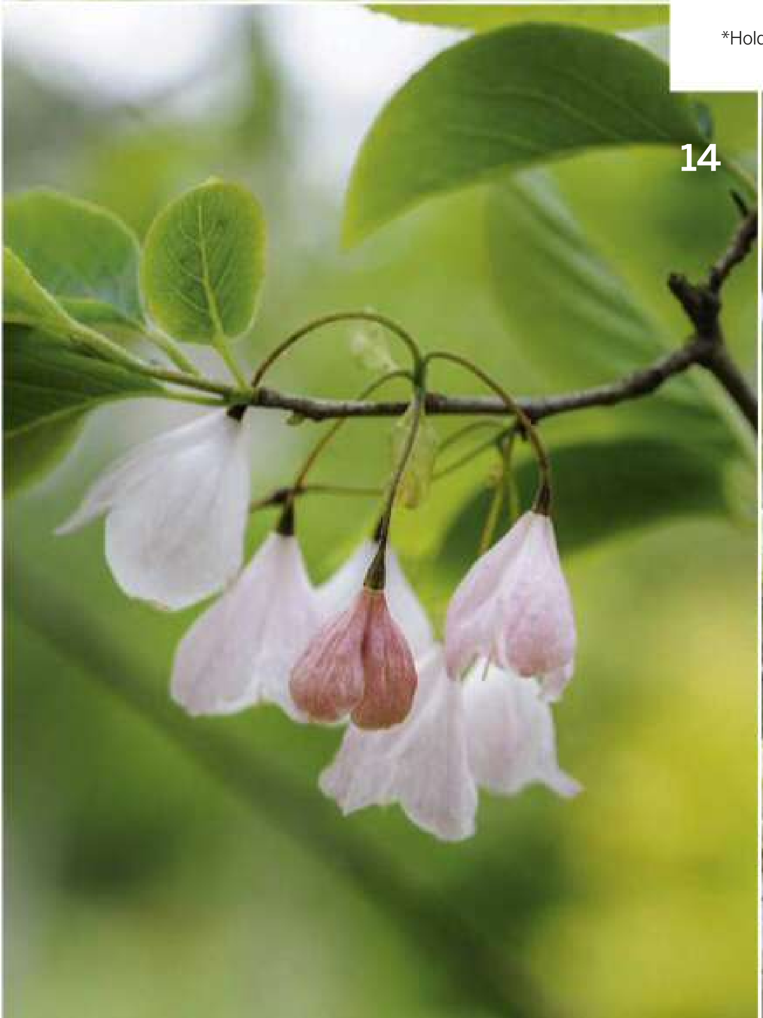
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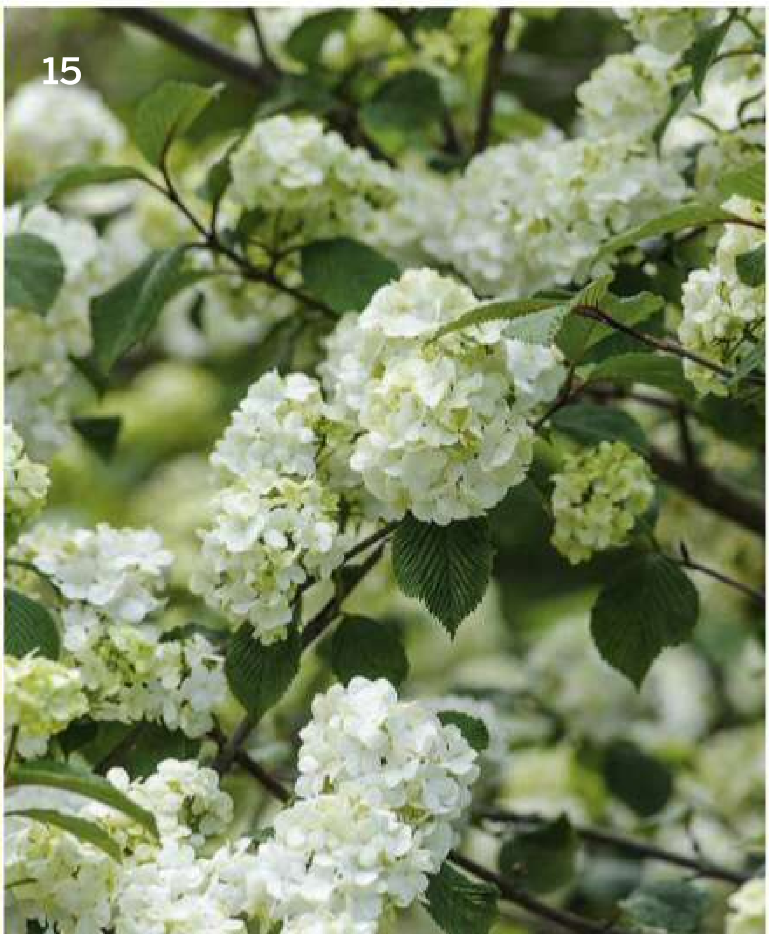
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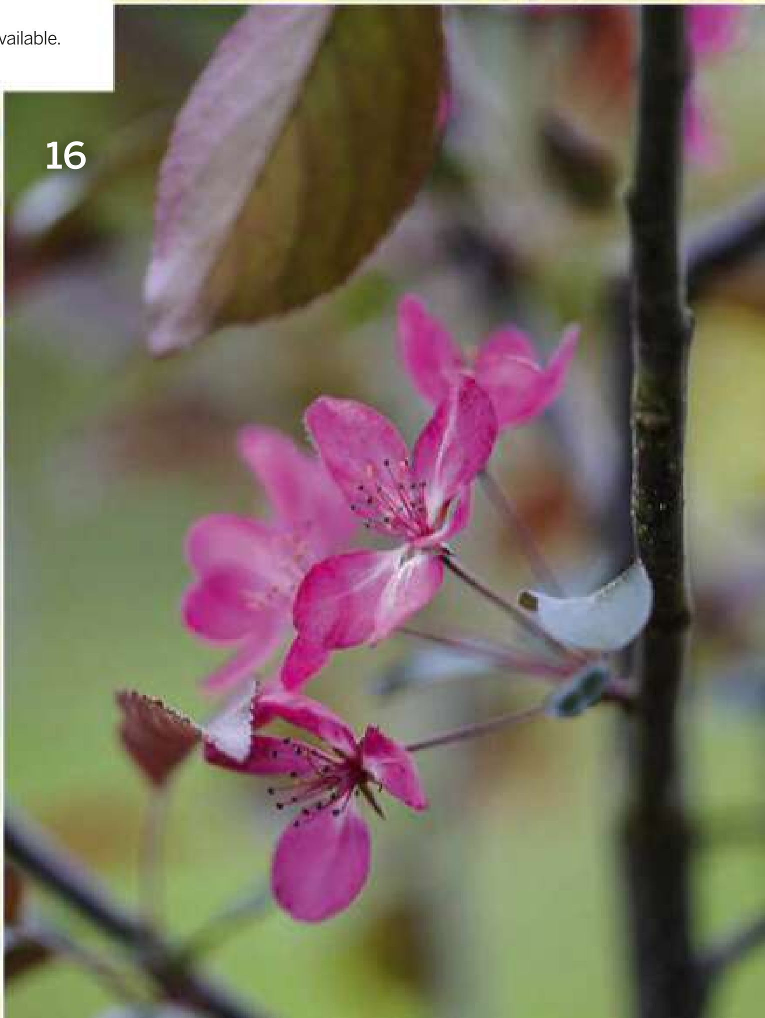
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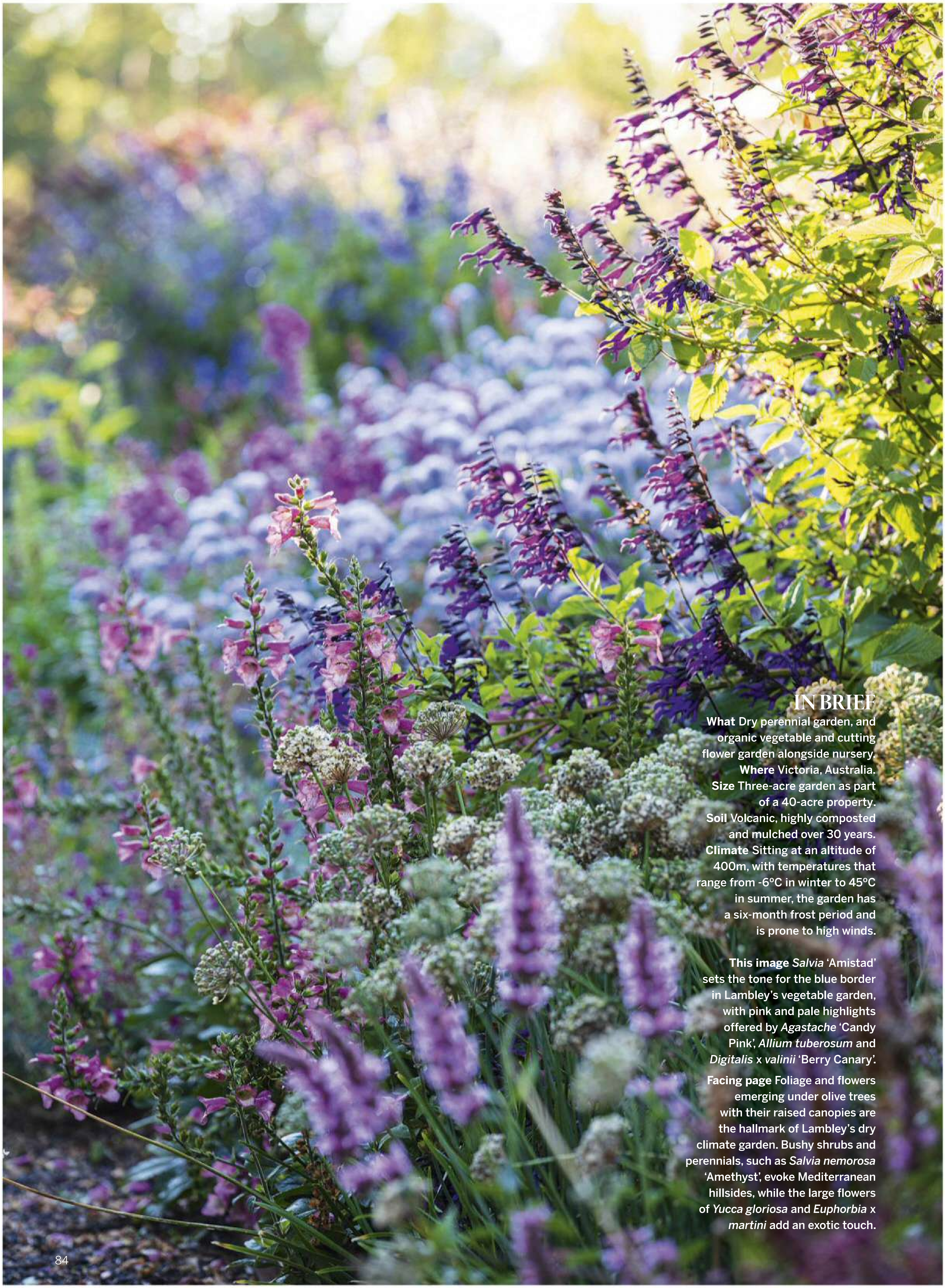


IN BRIEF

What Dry perennial garden, and organic vegetable and cutting flower garden alongside nursery.
Where Victoria, Australia.
Size Three-acre garden as part of a 40-acre property.
Soil Volcanic, highly composted and mulched over 30 years.
Climate Sitting at an altitude of 400m, with temperatures that range from -6°C in winter to 45°C in summer, the garden has a six-month frost period and is prone to high winds.

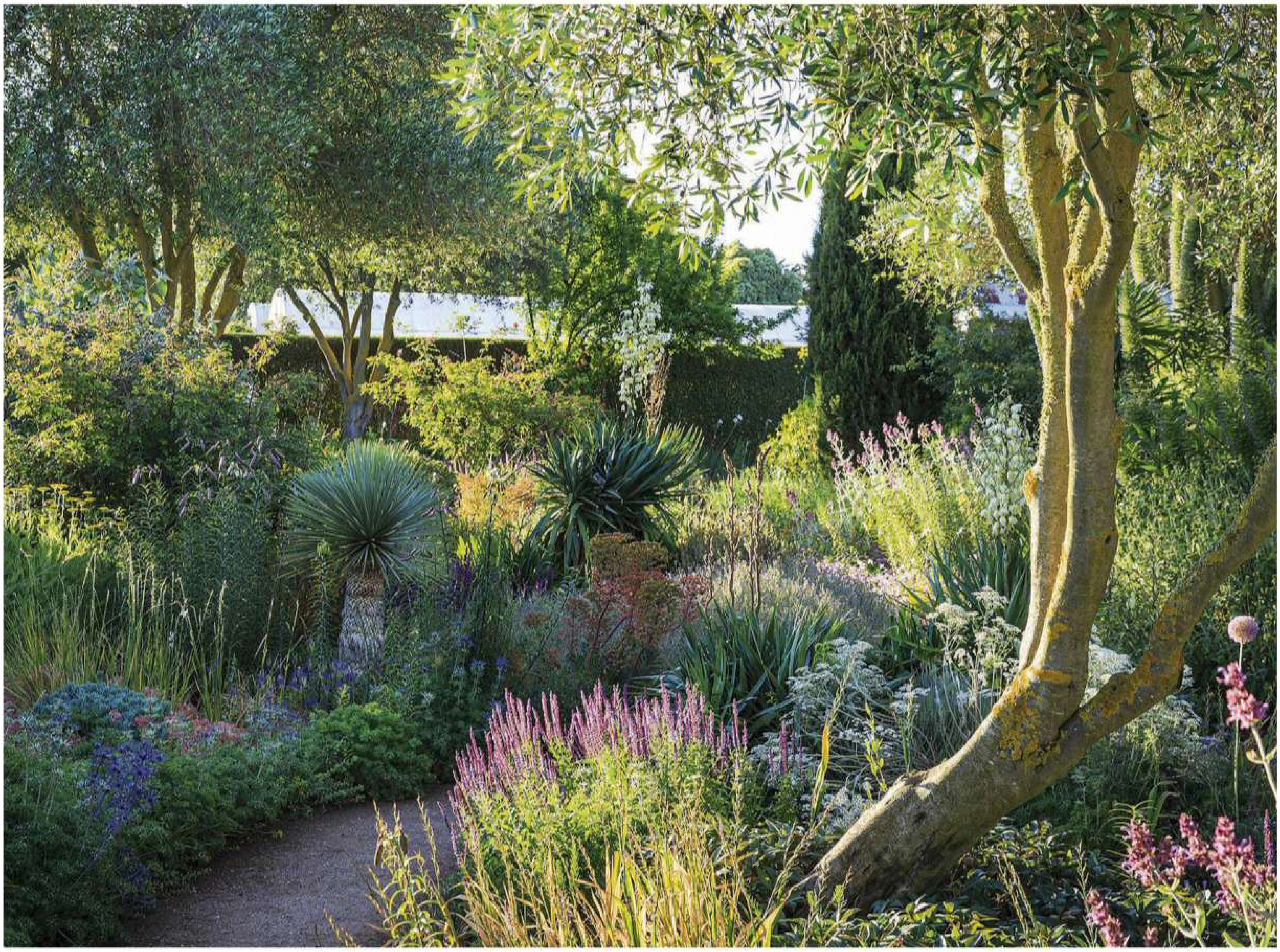
This image *Salvia* 'Amistad' sets the tone for the blue border in Lambley's vegetable garden, with pink and pale highlights offered by *Agastache* 'Candy Pink', *Allium tuberosum* and *Digitalis* x *valinii* 'Berry Canary'.

Facing page Foliage and flowers emerging under olive trees with their raised canopies are the hallmark of Lambley's dry climate garden. Bushy shrubs and perennials, such as *Salvia nemorosa* 'Amethyst', evoke Mediterranean hillsides, while the large flowers of *Yucca gloriosa* and *Euphorbia* x *martini* add an exotic touch.

PAINTING WITH PLANTS

Beauty and sustainability combine in the gardens David Glenn and Criss Canning have created alongside their world-renowned Lambley Nursery

WORDS HILARY BURDEN PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS



Plantsman David Glenn is a leading exponent of dry-climate gardening and has gardened in one place for nearly 30 years. On 40 acres, Lambley Nursery & Garden is set around the 19th-century farmhouse David shares with his artist wife Criss Canning in the hot and dry windswept plains of the central Victorian gold fields, where the Djadjawurrung people farmed for millennia before Europeans settled in Australia.

Lambley's complex of gardens, which includes dry-climate, flower, fruit and vegetable sections, is open all year round. The biggest challenge in making a garden here is the extremes of weather – nights in winter can drop to -6°C while in summer the days can frequently reach 45°C – so the only plants David chooses to grow are those that are happy in this climate.

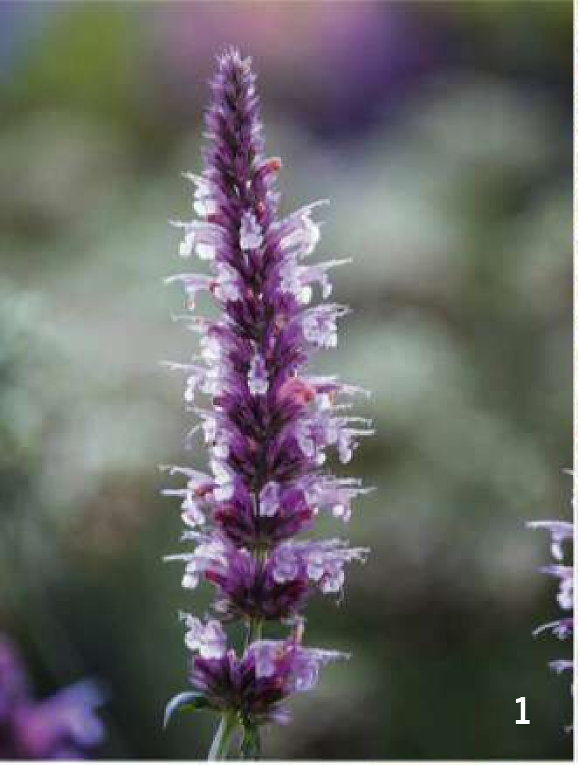
For David, all gardens have to be sustainable. Watering at Lambley is minimal and in the past year, the dry garden has only been watered once. In the main, plants originate in the southern parts of Europe, the Mediterranean coast, north Africa, Morocco and the Atlas Mountains, Greece, ▷

To continue turn to page 90

Above Windswept olive trees demonstrate the challenges of this dry garden. The spikiness offered by yuccas is cautiously maintained: their vigour can take over. However, the *Yucca rostrata* in the centre hasn't flowered for 25 years.

Right In this former paddock, eucalypts are kept to the perimeter, while pencil pines have been planted to provide wind protection and screening. The cool whites of *Nerium oleander* 'Album Plenum' offset the striking colours of pink *Salvia* 'Penny's Smile' and the brilliant orange-red *Zauschneria californica*.

David has been heavily influenced by Beth Chatto and James van Sweden, but with this garden he has very much found his own voice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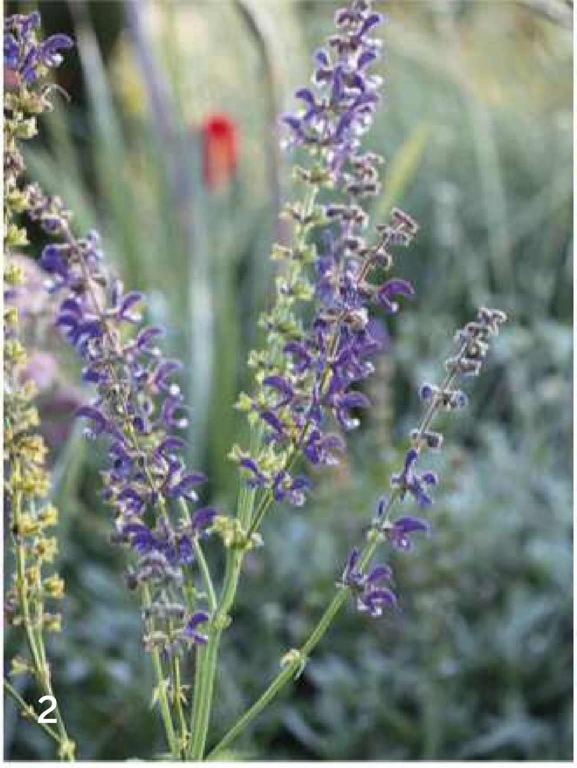
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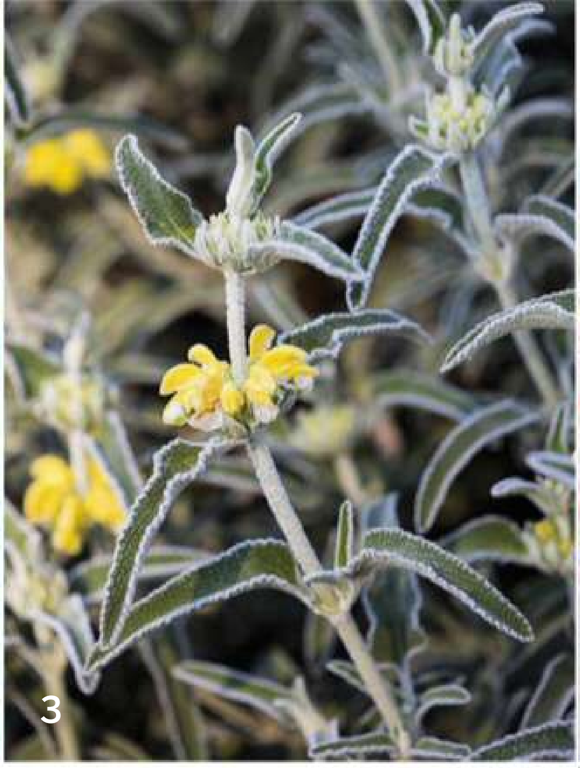
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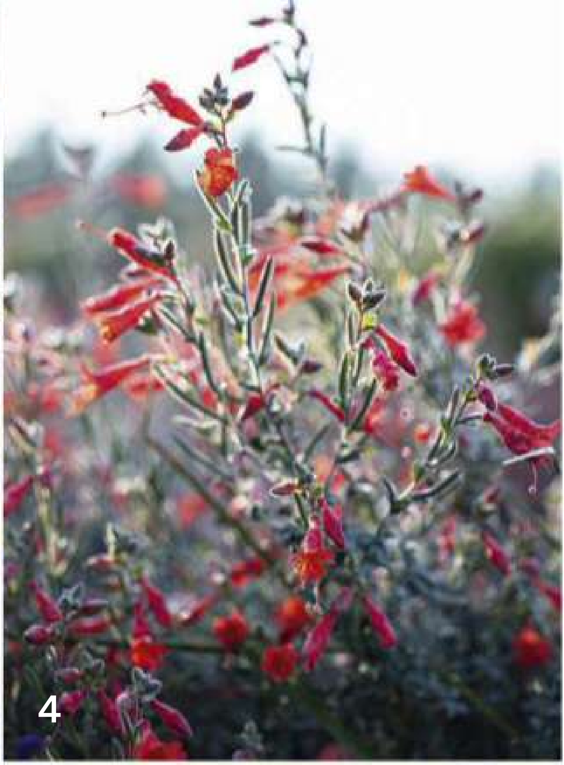
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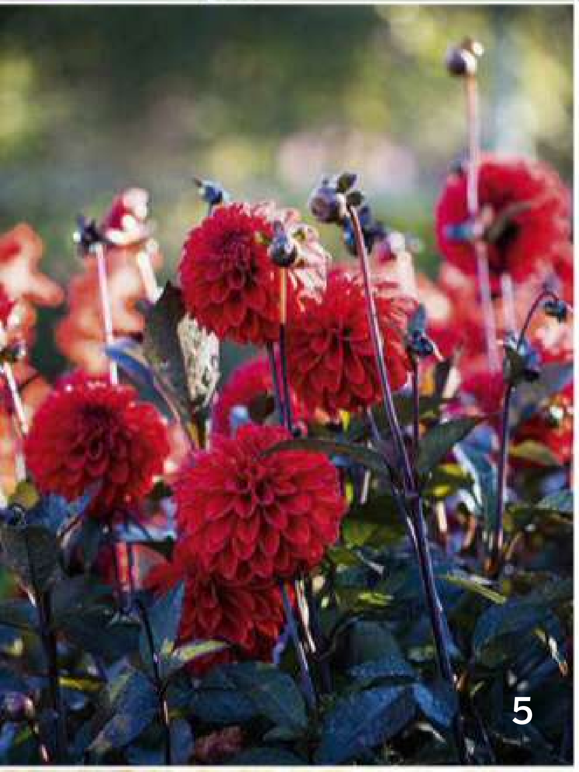
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24 KEY PLANTS

1 *Agastache* 'Candy Pink' Commonly known as giant hyssop, this showy and fragrant flower attracts butterflies and bees all summer and flowers right into autumn. 90cm. USDA 6a-9b[†].

2 *Salvia forsskaolii* A native of woods near the Turkish Black Sea coast, it is one of the best plants for dry shade, flowering spring and early summer. 90cm. RHS H5.

3 *Phlomis platystegia* A rare and beautiful phlomis from the Judean Mountains in Israel, which flowers over a long period from spring into summer. Best in a well-drained spot in full sun, it is just hardy enough to get through most winters unscathed. 1.2m.

4 *Zauschneria californica* 'Catalina' Collected on Santa Catalina Island off the coast of Southern California, this upright perennial has tubular, orange-red flowers that are a food source for migrating hummingbirds. Offers a spectacular flowering display in mid to late autumn. 50cm.

5 *Dahlia* 'Fire Mountain' A cultivar bred in New Zealand by Keith Hammett. David uses it to add a touch of Impressionistic red to the blue borders in his vegetable garden. 75cm.

6 *Salvia azurea* This clump-forming perennial is one of the stars of the garden. It creates a river of ethereal powder sky blue flowers in Lambley's vegetable garden, which is one of the most-commented upon plantings in the garden. A relatively hardy salvia, it is one that is at its most spectacular in autumn. 1.5m. USDA 6a-9b.

7 *Gypsophila paniculata* Summer Sparkles (= 'Esm Chispa') This cultivar of the daisy-like plant commonly known as baby's breath forms a uniform, rounded clump of grey-green foliage that becomes completely covered in lightly fragrant flowers from late spring through midsummer. 40cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

8 *Euphorbia* x *martini* seedling Known as Martin's spurge, this grows in a variety of conditions, is resilient to most pests and disease, and is drought, deer and rabbit tolerant. 1.5m. RHS H5.

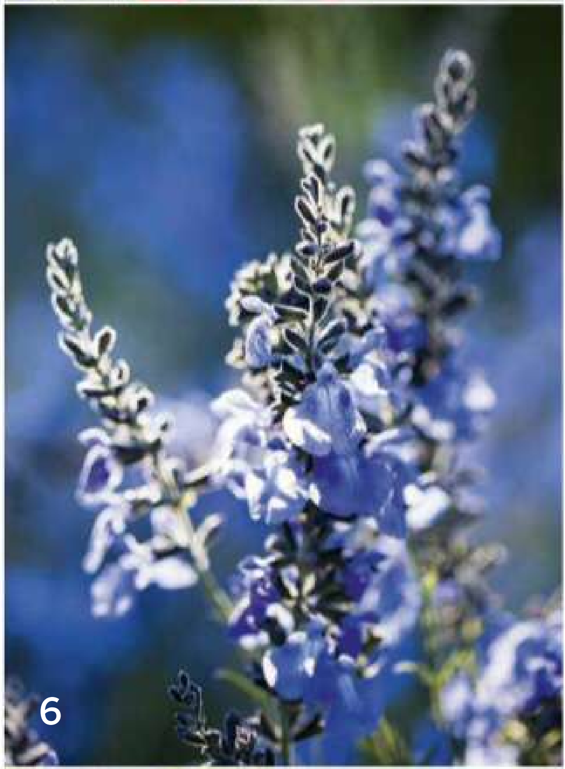
9 *Pelargonium sidoides* The near-black flowers of this South African native appear nearly all year round making it an attractive perennial. Known as the African geranium, its roots have been used for centuries in traditional medicines. 30cm. AGM[*]. RHS H1C.

10 *Cistus* x *lenis* 'Grayswood Pink' An attractive cultivar of this evergreen shrub, common in Mediterranean areas, copes with poor soil and full sun exposure. 1m. USDA 8a-10b.

11 *Agapanthus* 'Pallidus' An attractive Dutch cultivar that is drought tolerant once established and has a long flowering period. At Lambley it lines the driveway. 90cm. USDA 8a-10b.

12 *Eryngium bourgatii* 'Oxford Blue' Grown in the dry climate garden at Lambley for more than two decades, this sea holly offers both beauty and structure. Spent flowers are removed to encourage blooming from late spring into winter. 40cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Turn to page 91 for more key plants from Lambley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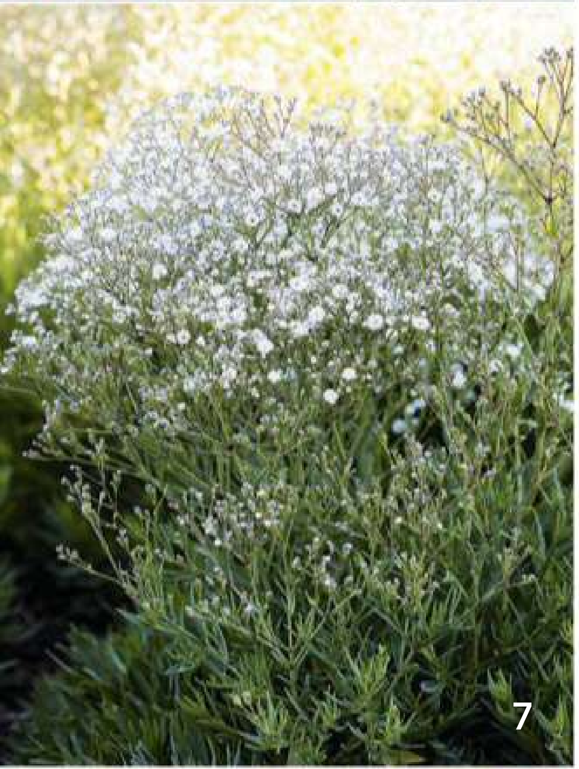
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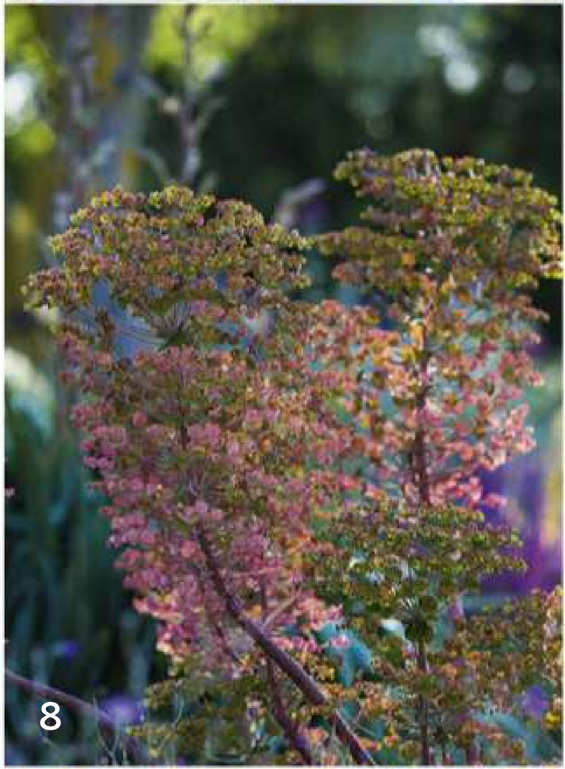
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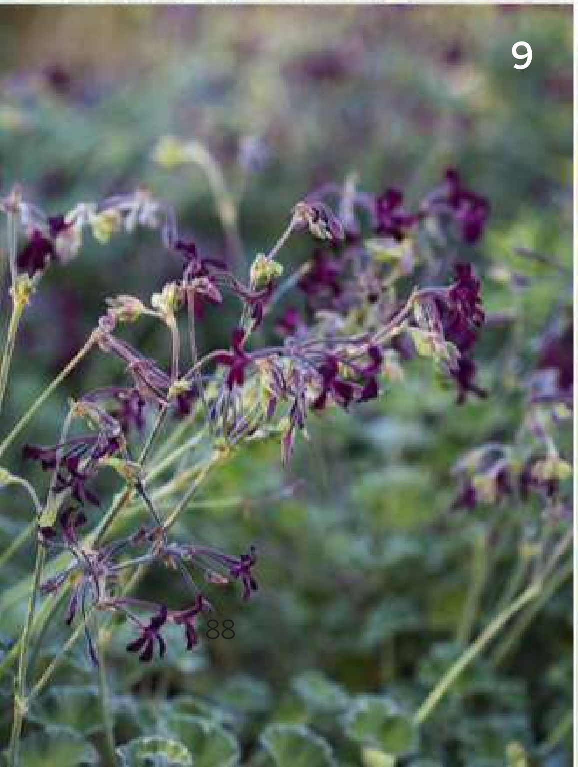
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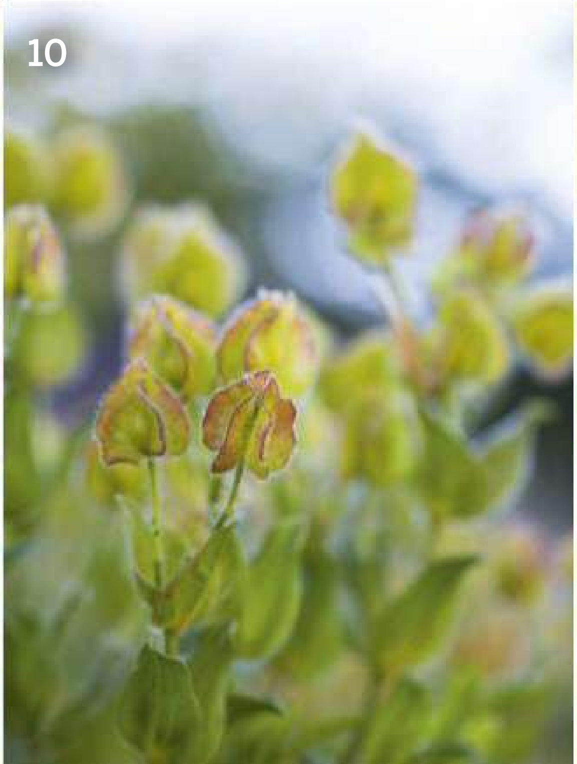
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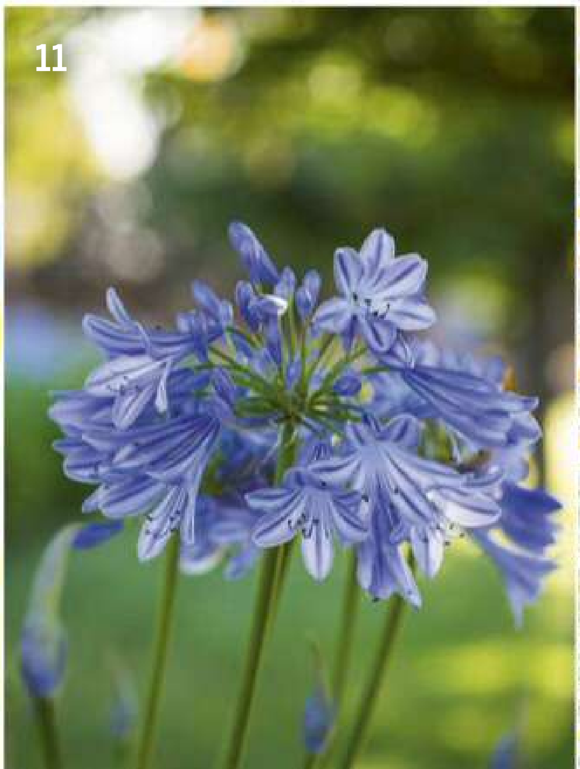
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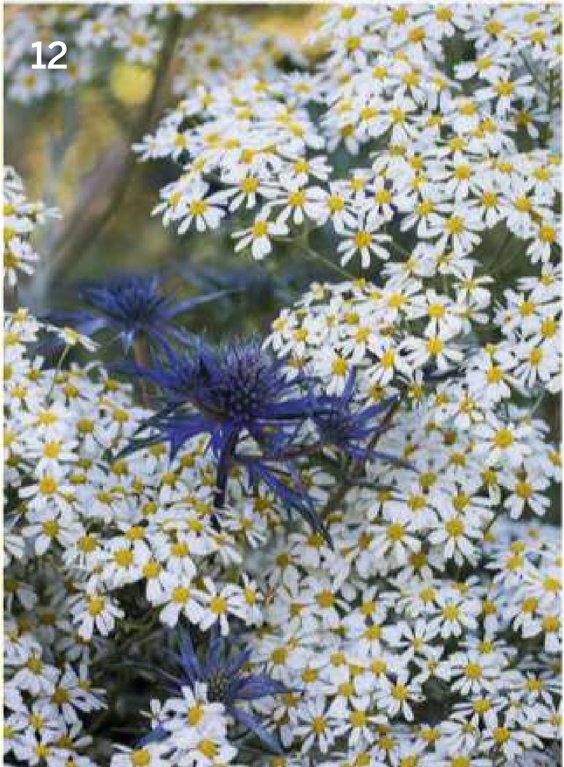
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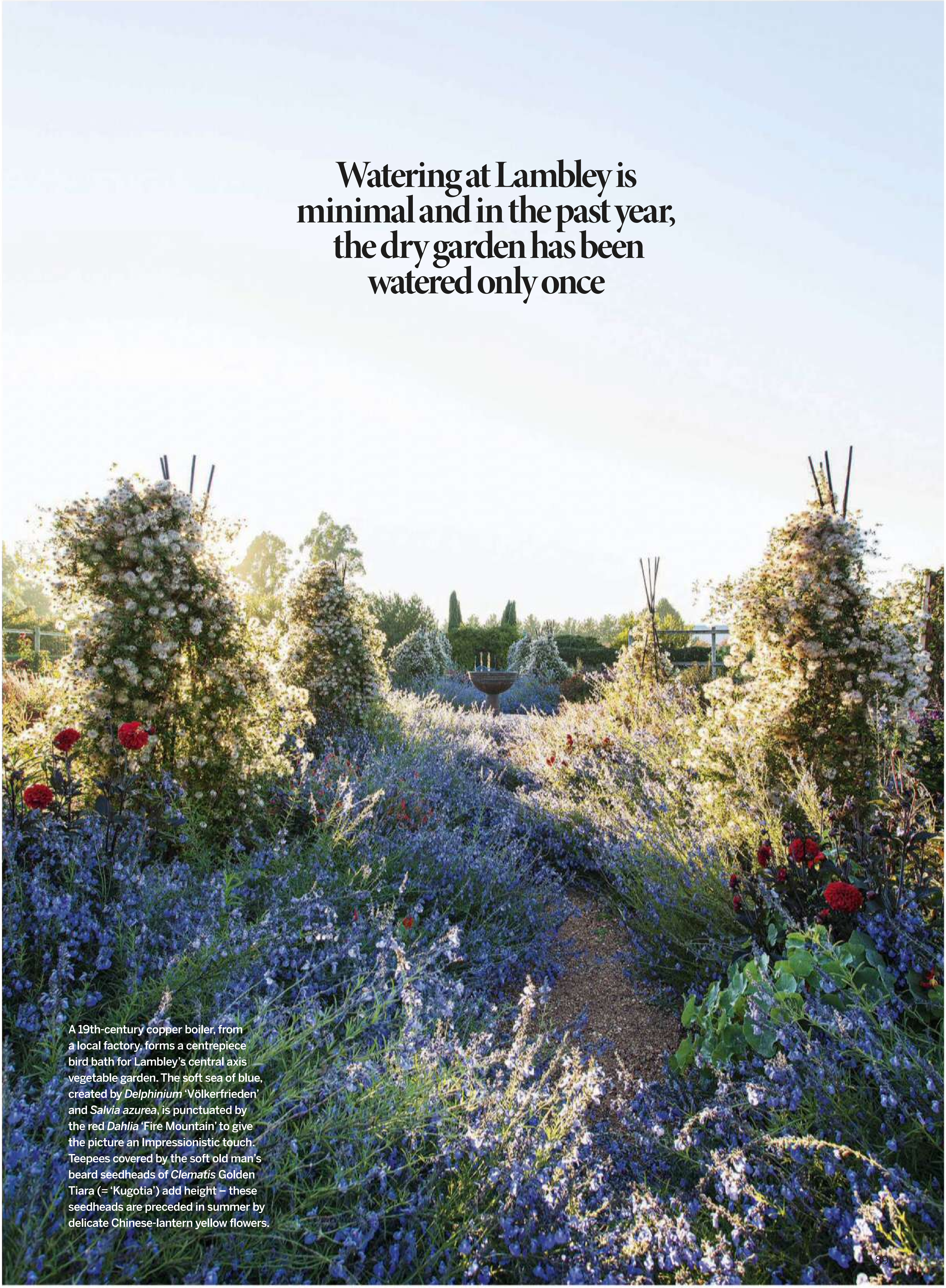
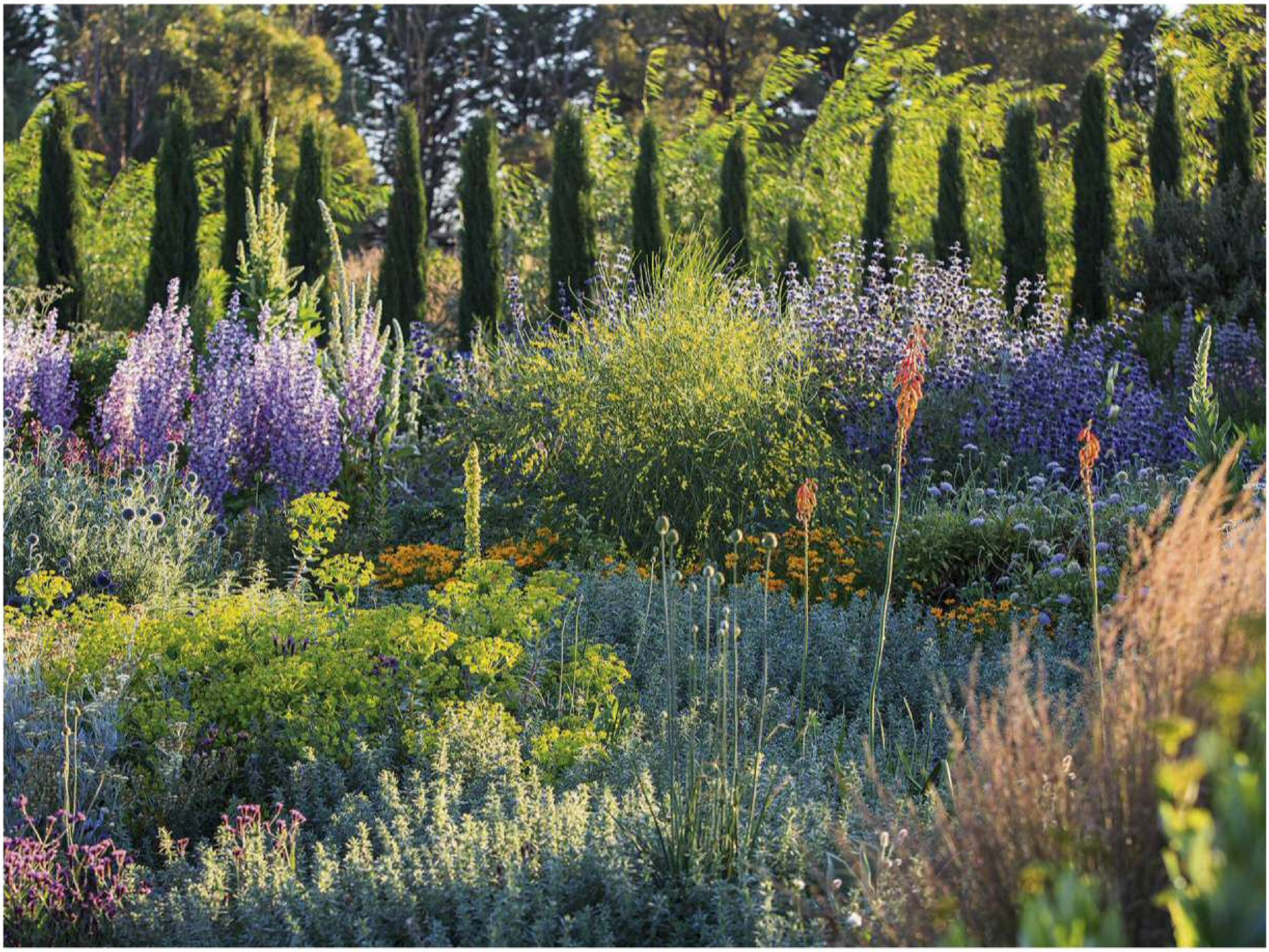
Watering at Lambley is minimal and in the past year, the dry garden has been watered only once



A 19th-century copper boiler, from a local factory, forms a centrepiece bird bath for Lambley's central axis vegetable garden. The soft sea of blue, created by *Delphinium* 'Völkerfrieden' and *Salvia azurea*, is punctuated by the red *Dahlia* 'Fire Mountain' to give the picture an Impressionistic touch. Teepees covered by the soft old man's beard seedheads of *Clematis* Golden Tiara (= 'Kugotia') add height – these seedheads are preceded in summer by delicate Chinese-lantern yellow flowers.



Above In the Mediterranean garden, drought-tolerant plants from southern Europe, such as the fragrant yellow broom *Genista aetnensis* and acid-yellow *Euphorbia* 'Blue Haze' mix with southern hemisphere natives including the Australian blue grass *Poa labillardierei* 'Suggan Buggan'. Framing the yellow broom are two blue salvias. *Salvia* 'Allen Chickering', to the right, is a drought-tolerant Californian cultivar, while the fabulous *Salvia sclarea* var. *turkestaniana* 'Jim Archibald', grown from seed originally collected in Turkey by Jim and Jenny Archibald, is the clary sage David believes so lovely he now grows no other.

▷ Turkey, Central Asia and parts of China, Chile, California, Arizona and Australia. Only a few native plants that grow wild in the local area have found a place here; the best Australian natives grow in much poorer soils with lower rainfall and less frost.

Soil preparation is everything. "Our soils tend to bake and crack in summer unless we add lots of organic matter," says David. "We dig the soil as deeply as we can and then mix in a good four to six inches of compost. The compost helps to aerate the soil as well as holding moisture and also allows the plant roots to penetrate well down. If we don't prepare the soil well, after a while it will become compacted and the roots of the plants will tend to only grow close to the surface. In a dry spell they will stress and may burn. We use fine, composted, pine bark mulch because I like the look of it, but we stir it up every now and then as it can form a fine hydrophobic mat."

Species and varieties are selected to not only cope with the climate but for their pollinator benefits. "We like to see insects and butterflies, and have lots of birds," says David. "Birds help to balance the insect life. We get aphids in spring, but we don't intervene – ladybirds take care of them eventually."

In the past David was heavily influenced by the British nurserywoman Beth Chatto ▷

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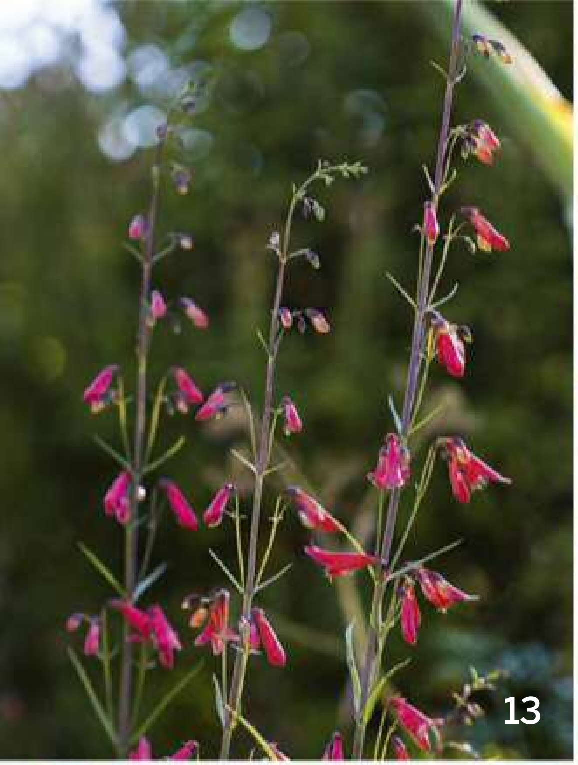
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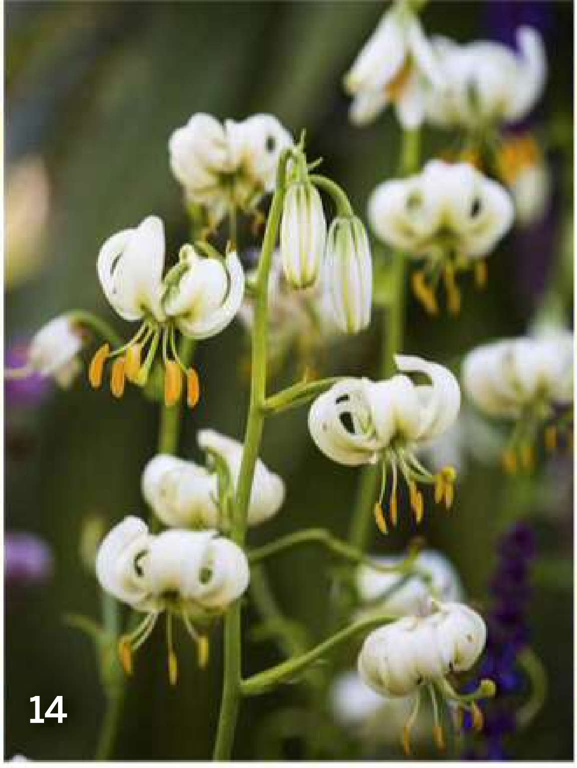
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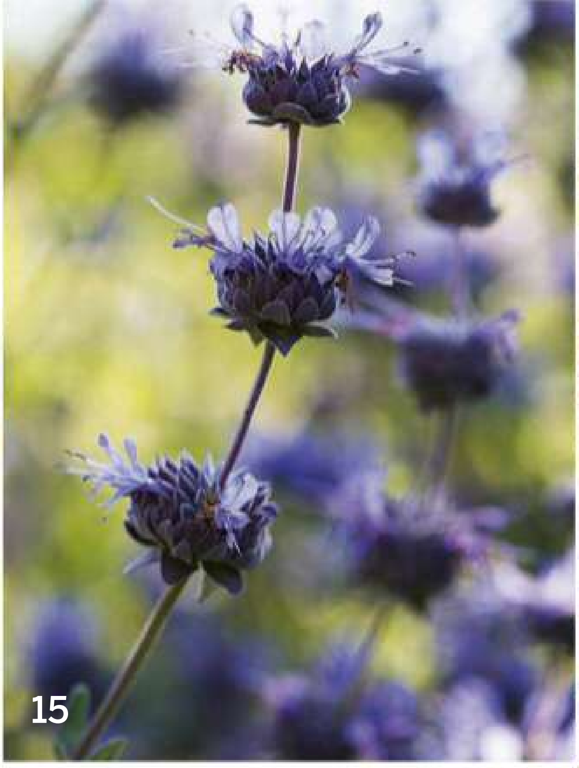
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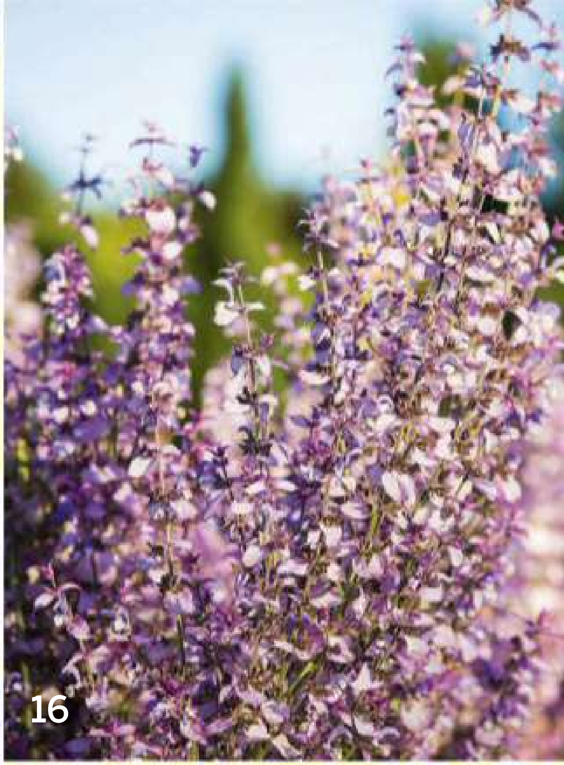
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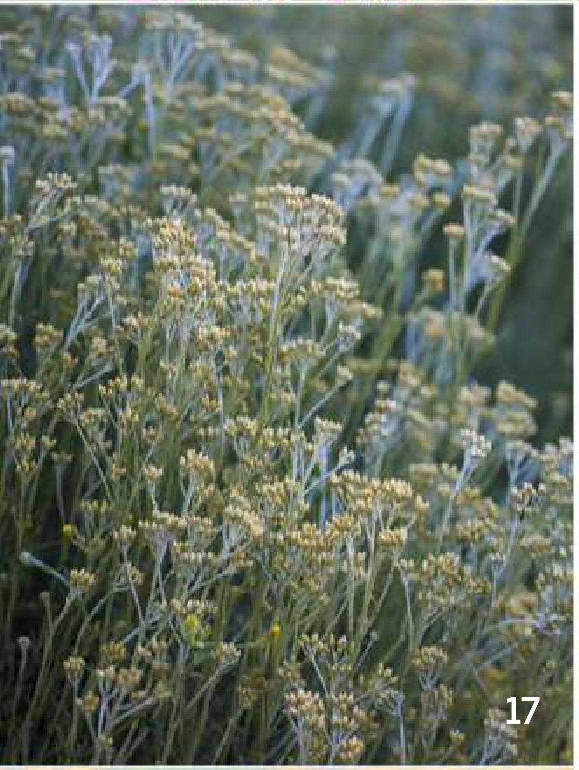
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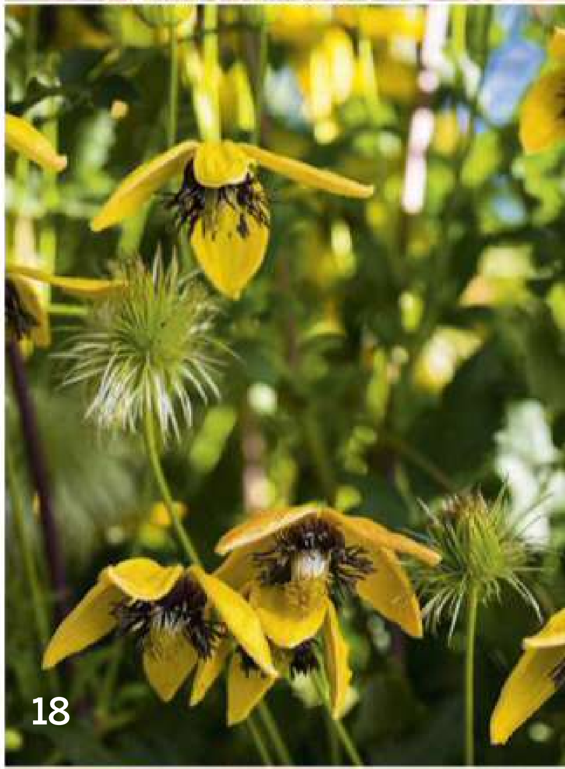
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24 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

13 ***Penstemon barbatus*** A native of Mexico and southern USA, pollinated by hummingbirds. Tall spires, which emerge from rosettes of glossy fresh green leaves, carry hundreds of good-sized tubular red flowers from early summer to early autumn. 1.8m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-8b.

14 ***Lilium martagon* var. *album*** The martagon lily is one of the most widespread lilies in Europe, occurring widely as a meadow plant in the Alps. This elegant white variety is attractive to pollinators, highly fragrant and perfect for cutting. 1.5m. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

15 ***Salvia clevelandii*** Known variously as fragrant, blue, Jim or Cleveland sage, this is a fast-growing, highly aromatic salvia species that is native to California, bearing plentiful clusters of lavender to dark-purple flowers with long stamens. 1.2m.

16 ***Salvia sclarea* var. *turkestaniana* 'Jim Archibald'** A spectacular clary sage grown from seed collected by Jim and Jenny Archibald. David found the resulting seedlings so good he pulled out all other *S. sclarea* seedlings and has grown only this form since, keeping it true to type. 1m.

17 ***Helichrysum thianschanicum*** A neat shrubby perennial from the mountains of Central Asia that offers intensely silver foliage and lemon flowerheads. 70cm.

18 ***Clematis* Golden Tiara (= 'Kugotia')** A clematis that starts flowering in early summer and still has flowers in early autumn. Tough, vigorous and long lived, it is easy to maintain. David cuts it to the ground during winter and ties it in to supports during spring. 2.5m. AGM. RHS H6.

19 ***Coreopsis* 'Schnittgold'** A hardy perennial, repeat flowering from early to late summer. Suitable for sunny garden locations, it provides excellent food for bees. 50cm.

20 ***Brodiaea californica*** Flowers later than most old world bulbs, offering a month-long blooming period. Increases well and makes a good cut flower. David grows it under *Salvia leucantha*, which in Lambley's frosty climate takes off after the *Brodiaea* has finished flowering. 30cm.

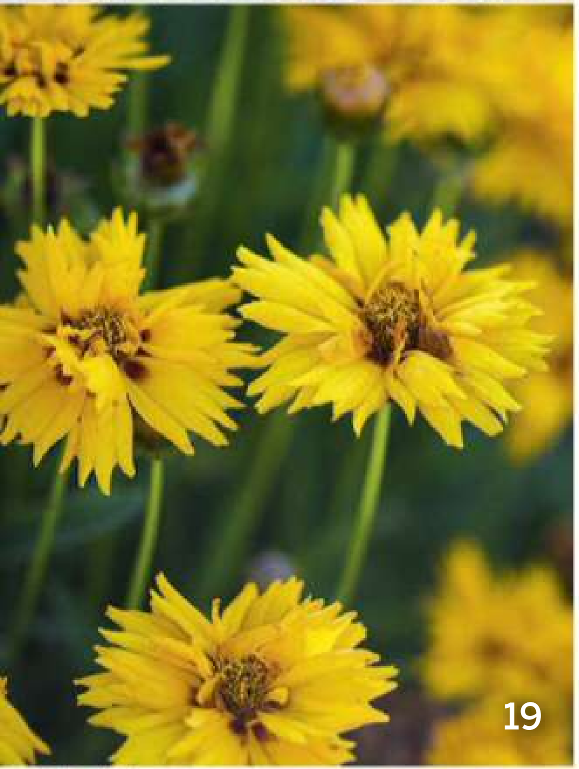
21 ***Bupleurum fruticosum*** Flowers for most of late spring, summer and autumn with handsome seedheads carrying on the display into winter. 2m. RHS H4.

22 ***Ixia polystachya*** This South African bulb is one of the stars of the spring to early summer garden with its clusters of white flowers with sky-blue centres on tall stems, and one that remains attractive into autumn when buff-coloured seedheads catch the sunlight. 90cm. USDA 8a-11b.

23 ***Phlomis grandiflora* 'Lloyd's Silver'** Grown in Lambley's dry garden where its grey leaves and whorls of yellow, claw-like flowers are handsome all year round. Best cut back halfway through winter to keep it tidy. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 7a-11.

24 ***Santolina rosmarinifolia* 'Primrose Gem'** This evergreen shrub makes a dark green mound with beautifully contrasting primrose-coloured buttons during late spring and early summer. Drought tolerant and handsome the year round. 40cm. RHS H5.

***Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.**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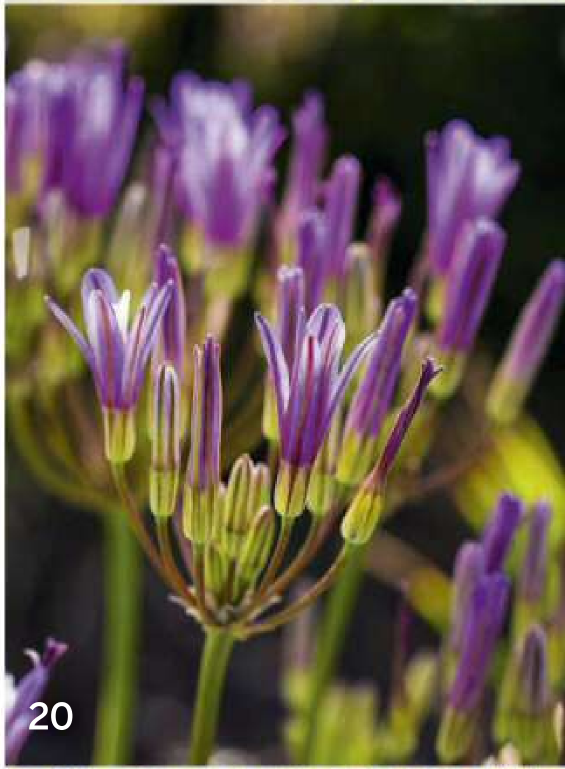
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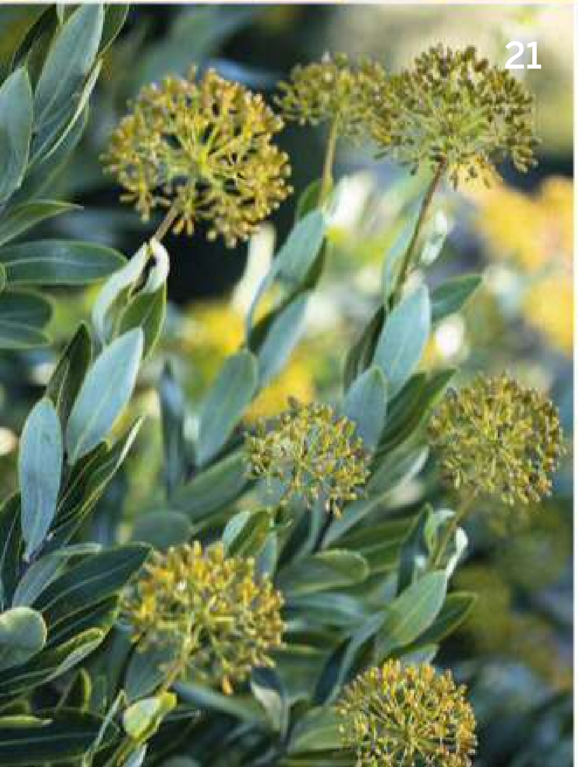
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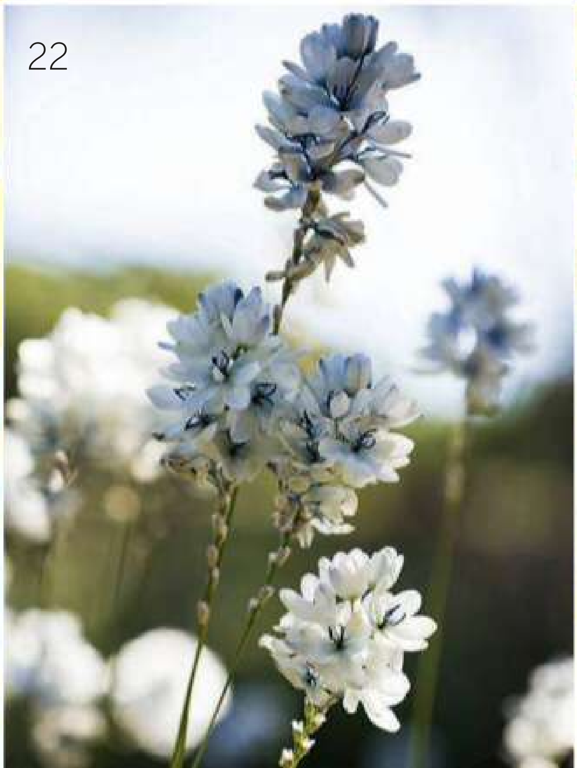
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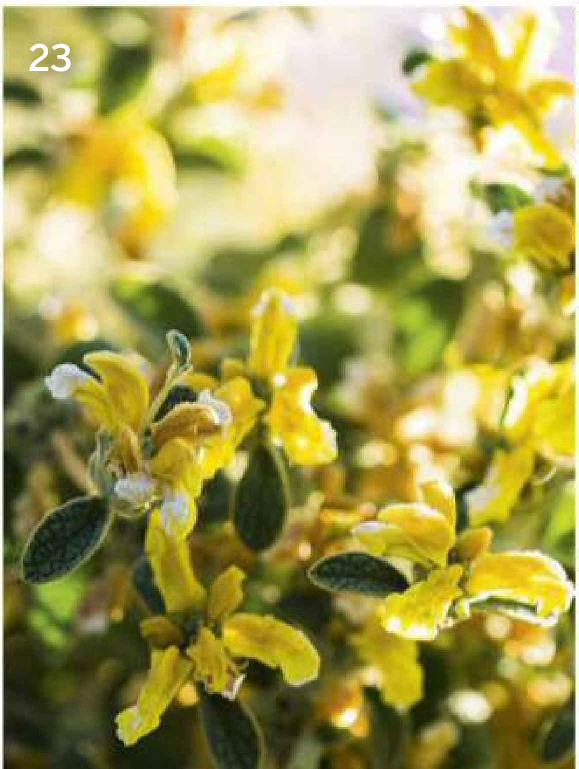
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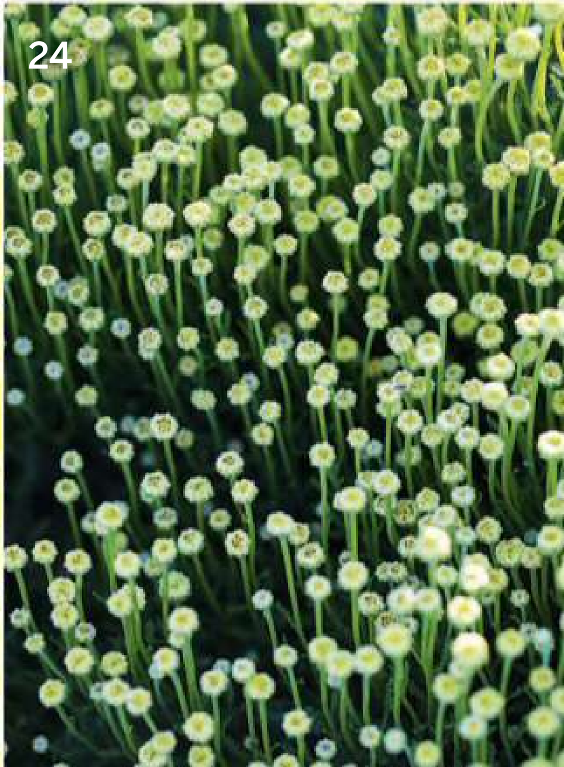
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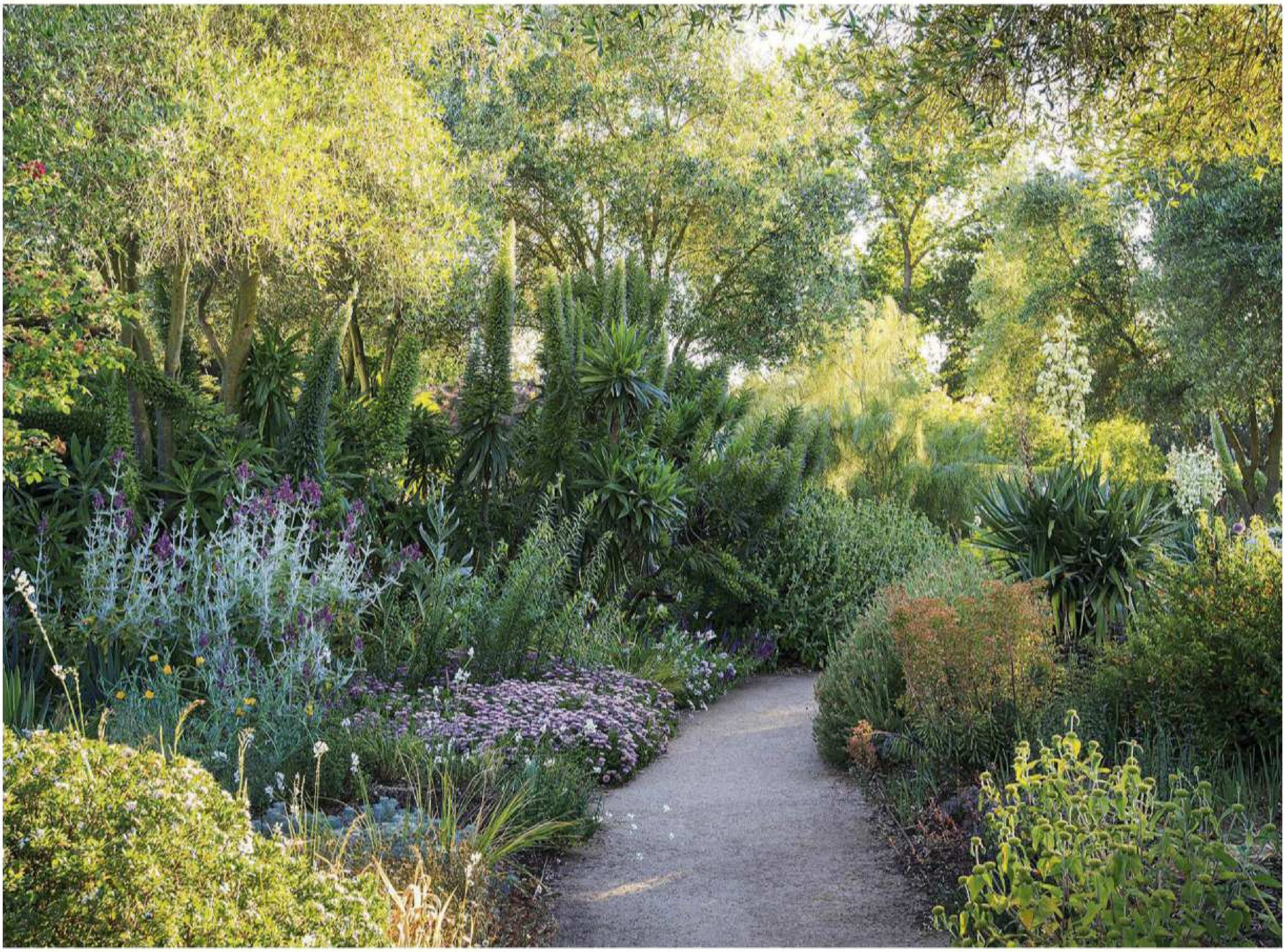

▷ and the American landscape architect James van Sweden, but with this garden he has found his own voice. This is very much an Australian garden, albeit one where planting also reflects a Mediterranean influence. Eucalypts are kept to the perimeter because of how challenging it is to grow plants underneath them, with olive trees favoured instead.

The vegetable garden is large by most standards. New varieties of vegetables and flowering annuals are regularly trialled to see which grow best in the central highlands where frosts can span from April to mid November.

At Lambley, gardening is different to nature. "The natural world is so grand and so awesome it is fruitless to copy it," says David. "What we can do in a small way is to make beautiful pictures with the plants playing against each other and in harmony. The garden should look like it is happening now, or is about to happen, not that it happened last week. Gardens change every moment of every day." □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Address Lambley Nursery & Gardens, 395 Lesters Road, Ascot, Victoria 3364, Australia.
Tel+61 (0)3 5343 4303.
Web lambley.com.au
Open Daily, 9am-5pm.

Above Striking groves of frost-hardy *Echium* 'Cobalt Towers' withstand both dry and frost, and can grow up to 4.5m. Elms planted in 1870 have been allowed to sucker to replace the older trees now in decline.

Left In the dry garden, sinuous paths wind around trees. "Paths need to make sense, not snake around for the sake of it," says David. Beneath the trees the delicacy of late-flowering *Ixia polystachya* contrasts with the striking beauty of *Yucca gloriosa* and *Salvia canariensis* f. *candidissima*, which is rare and difficult to propagate, with woolly leaves that age to silver-grey.

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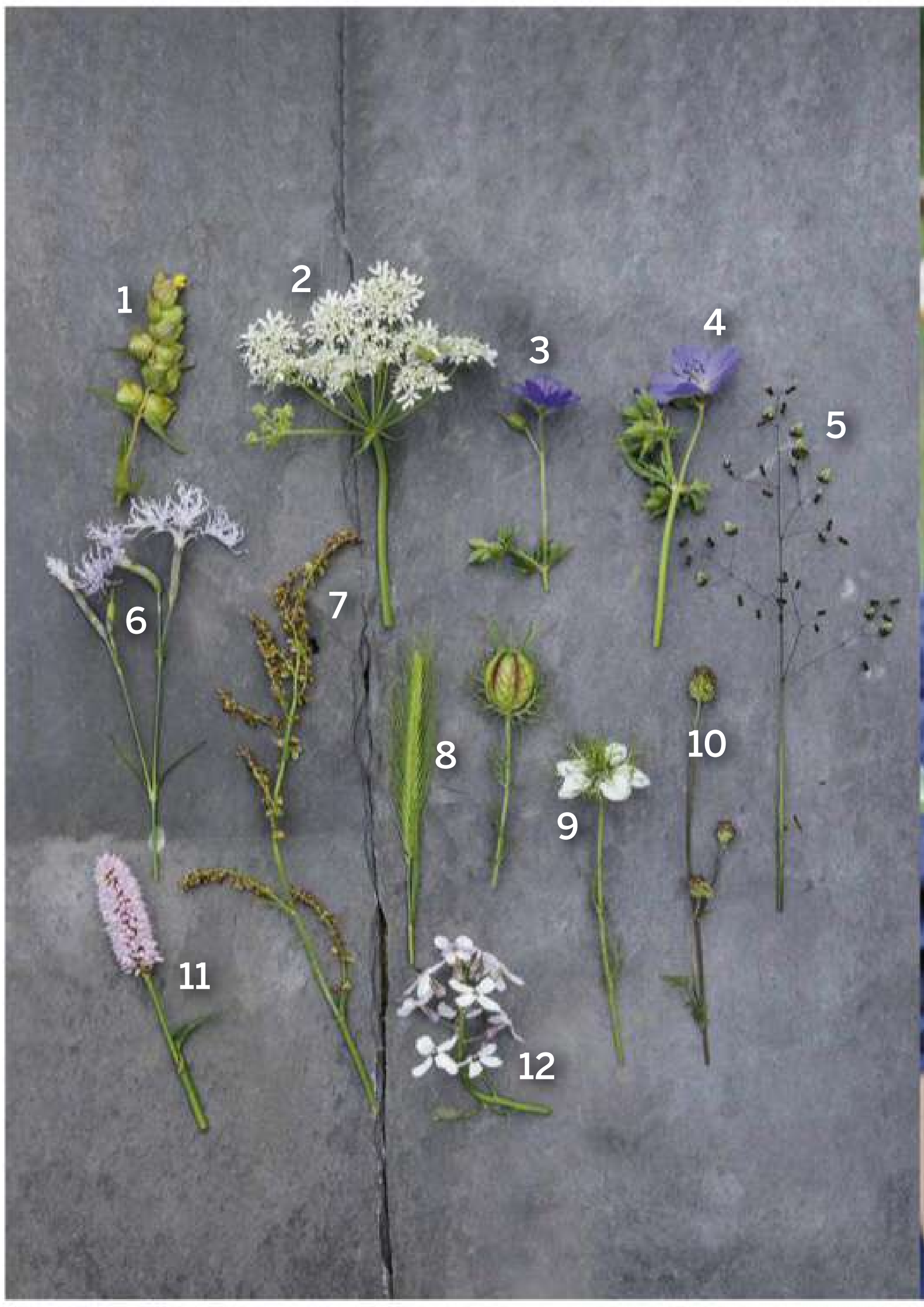
Pearls of perfection

Like their more ornate counterpart the tulipiere or tulpenvaas, flower bricks were designed to hold single stems of cut flowers but these smaller vessels were used in the 18th-century to display less valuable flowers than the much sought-after tulips. Flower bricks are wonderfully practical with an often simple design that is regaining popularity. They have also inspired gardener Hannah Gardner to explore the many different vessels we can use to display flowers, and to make the most of the everyday plants and wildflowers we sometimes take for granted

WORDS HANNAH GARDNER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



MAY MORNING

A joyful arrangement of cottage-garden plants and wildflowers that hopefully conveys the cheerfulness and energy of an early summer hay meadow.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

This simple but interesting ceramic flower bucket with tiny elfin handles is fun as it plays with proportion, the wide neck gives lots of scope for a large bunch. I placed a gently scrunched ball of chicken wire inside the bucket before I started to place the flowers. This helps to hold the slender stems in position and achieve the romantic, loose effect of a wispy diaphanous hay meadow.

For contrast I've grouped it with a low ornate flower brick holding a single stem of a show-stopping fancy flower. The neutral colour of the peony enables the eye to explore the sculptural detail of the little flower brick. Like the flower bucket it's a modern piece by the Danish ceramicist Rebecca Edelmann for The Shop Floor Project, but it captures the spirit of these floral receptacles, which were so common in the 18th century for inexpensive blooms.

Floral selection and care tips

For the bucket I selected cottage garden stalwarts geraniums and the filigree annual nigella and arranged them with a few native wild plants. Uncut grasslands and roadside verges are bountiful now, as spring races towards summer. Forage only a few stems, cutting them to different lengths to achieve a naturalistic feel. I have included several grasses and various seedheads to reflect the composition of an actual meadow habitat. The heavier flowerheads of the hogweed serve as the focal flowers.

In the brick the golden stamens of *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Krinkled White' are artfully held within a large goblet of pale petals the texture of crinkled silk. The stiff foliage of the peony was actually too coarse for the narrow apertures so I replaced it with a few leaves of *Plagiorhegma dubium,* which has fine needle-like stalks.

Plants

1 ***Rhinanthus minor*** An annual associated with species rich meadows. 50cm.
2 ***Heracleum sphondylium*** Sturdier than cow parsley, hogweed's lacy flowerheads are pink in bud. 1.8m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b[†].
3 ***Geranium pratense*** A native wildflower of roadsides on chalky soils. 30-60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
4 ***Geranium* x *johnsonii* 'Johnson's Blue'** Perennial with abundant flowers from late spring. 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
5 ***Brizia media* 'Limouzi'** Shimmering semi-evergreen perennial quaking grass. 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.
6 ***Dianthus superbus*** Perennial with delicately fringed pastel flowers held on wiry stems. 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.
7 ***Rumex acetosa*** Offers branched flower spikes. 30-80cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.
8 ***Hordeum bulbosum*** Crop plant of southern Europe and the Middle East. 1.5m
9 ***Nigella papillosa* 'Delft Blue'** An annual with variable white-blue flowers. 60cm.
10 ***Sanguisorba minor*** Native perennial. 15-40cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.
11 ***Persicaria bistorta* 'Superba'** Flowers late spring and repeats through summer. 50-75cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.
12 ***Hesperis matronalis*** Biennial with edible flowers. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

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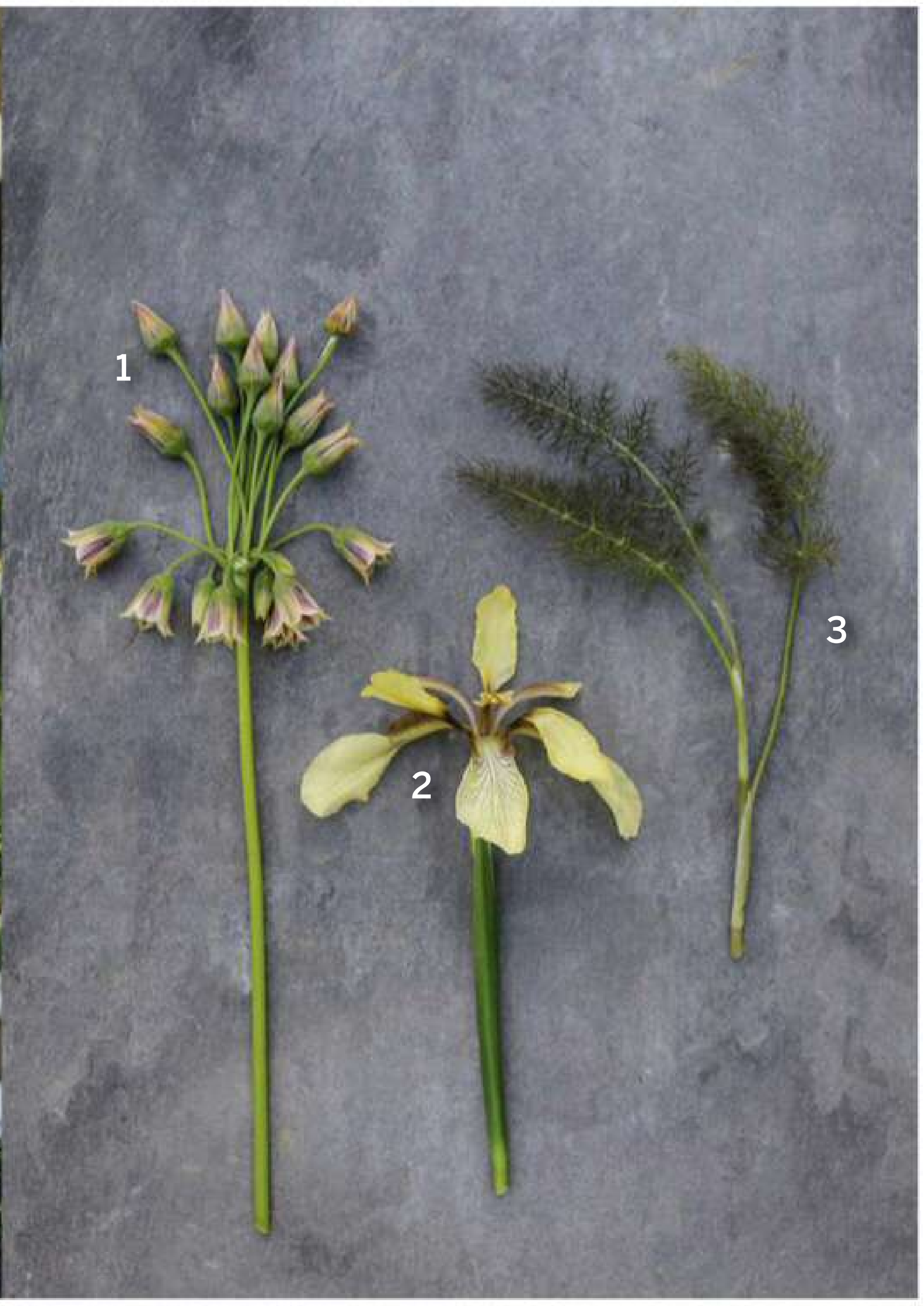
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†] Hardiness ratings given where available.



GOING DUTCH

Unlike their poor grounded cousins the flower bricks, these opulent vases traditionally demonstrate wealth and status. Having moved on from the grandiose days of the 17th century, it would be a shame to use a tulpenvaas or tulipiere solely for tulips as was originally intended. An enduring vase style in the Netherlands, Amsterdam shop windows exhibit a full spectrum of designs from funky and kitsch to more refined Delftware.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

With such a complex stackable vase as this flowers don't need to be attention grabbers. The figurative blue decoration on this contemporary tulipiere guided me towards a muted chalky palette. The modest but rather lovely *Iris foetidissima* is a native plant of woodlands and forgotten places. Much valued for the brilliance of its orange seeds in autumn and an unfussy disposition, the summer flowers are often overlooked. This distinctive pale-yellow and lilac variety is superior in a vase, the beauty of the veining fully appreciated close up. The graceful mother-of-pearl flower clusters of the allium add further detail with fennel foliage used as a textural accent, softening the angles and complementing the metallic lustre of the iris.

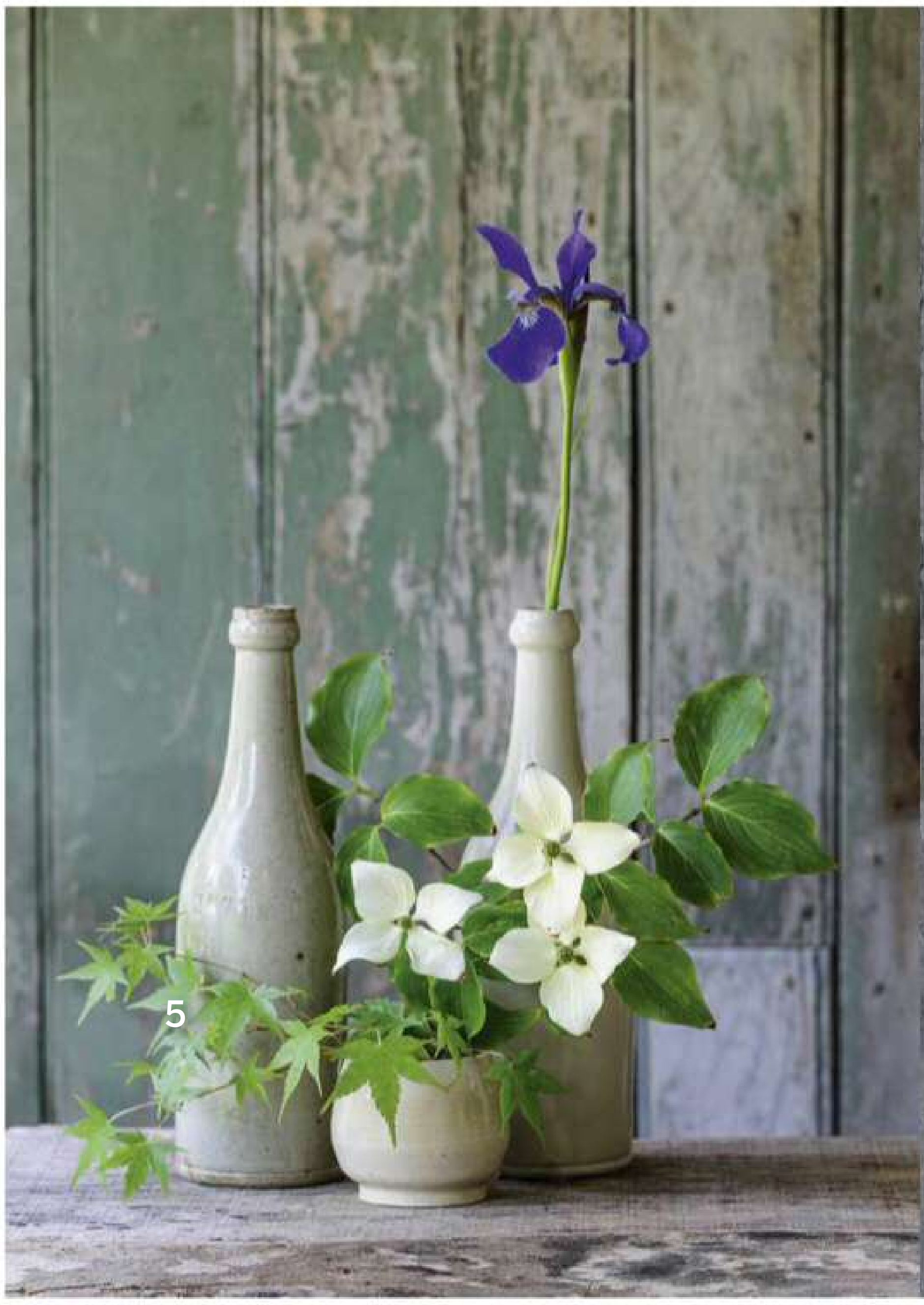
Floral selection and care tips

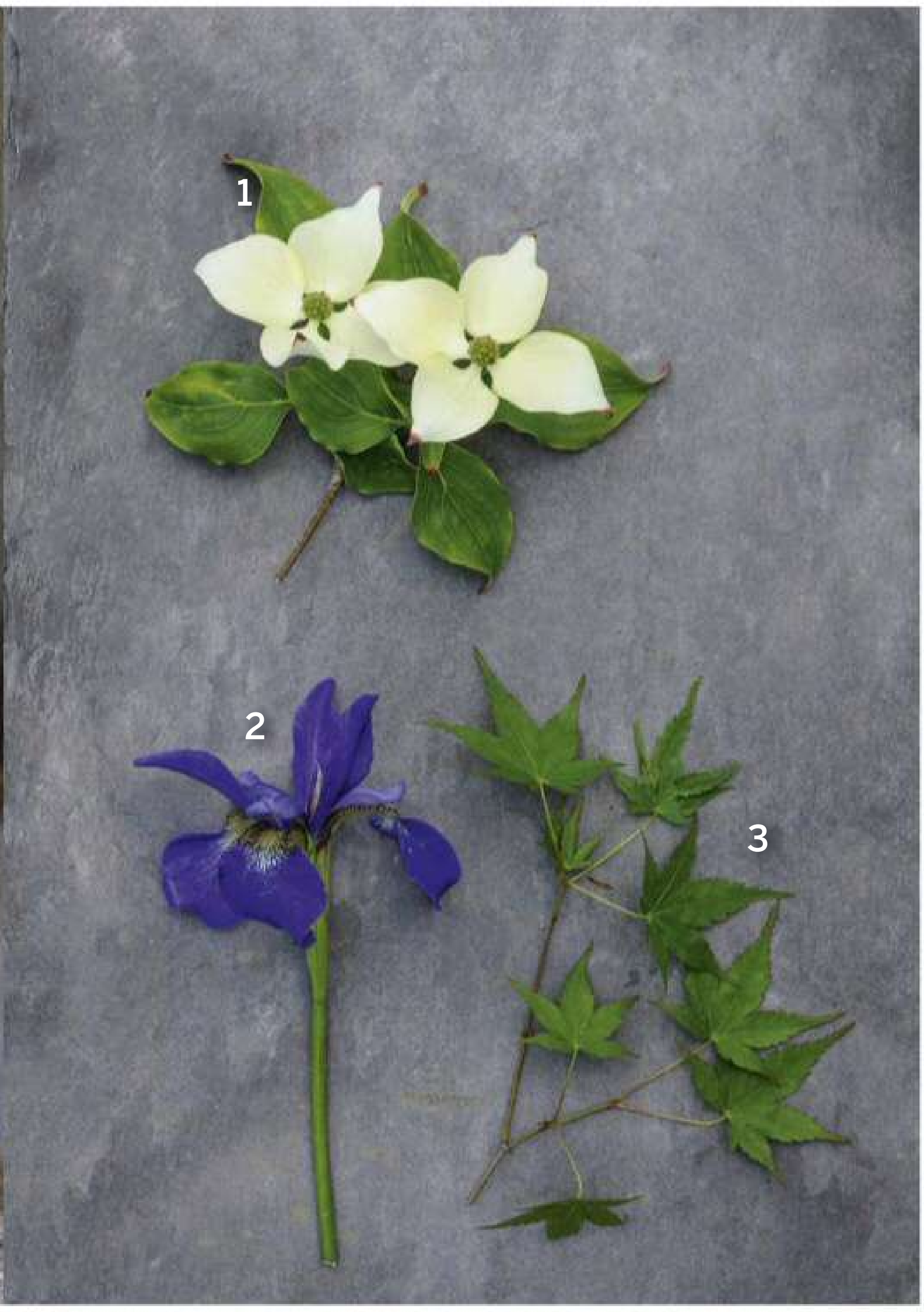
In this vase each floor is watertight so you must water each compartment storey of the vase to make these flowers last up to two weeks once cut. It is easier to use the fennel foliage attached to a flowering stem and be sure to change the water every three days to avoid bacterial build up. Ideally, pick your flowers in the cool of morning when their stems are distended and full of water.

Finally, a note on foraging for wildflowers. When you are taking plants from the wild remember to take only what you will use, respect off-limit areas and only pick things that are abundant. Always ask permission if you can and step lightly so you leave a space looking undamaged.

Plants

1 *Allium siculum*
Autumn planted bulb with candelabra flowers on long sturdy stems. Flowers May to June. 1.2m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.
2 *Iris foetidissima* var. *citrina*
Variation of a native iris that does well in tricky, dry shade. 60cm. RHS H6, USDA 6a-9b.
3 *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'
Sun-loving perennial herb with soft feathery foliage. 1.8m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.





SPIRIT OF JAPAN

A calming seasonal display that captures a fresh, early summer moment and creates a contemplative, serene atmosphere. My mother is a potter, and I grew up surrounded by beautiful functional ceramics many of which are still in use at home with (and without) flowers in them. She made this rustic tea bowl, which was influenced by the folk art ceramics of Japan, and I use it to hold plants that are strongly associated with, or grow wild in Japan.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
The simple composition and clean lines of the light-toned pottery allow the newly unfurled acer foliage and dramatic sculptural flowers of the Chinese dogwood to take centre stage.

Vintage beer bottles (from Burgundy circa 1900) provide a strong vertical accent. I placed them behind to create an uncluttered smooth canvas for the cornus flowers and to support the shapely stem of the iris. The footed tea-bowl is a much-loved vessel, lightly textured, gently rounded and stable. The slender neck of the bottles directs the gaze up towards the iridescent iris bloom. The shot of colour has greater impact as it stands apart from the neutralising green foliage.

Floral selection and care tips
Acers, with their rich autumn colour, are synonymous with Japan, and their fine skeletal branches have a bare architectural appeal during winter. Irises are popular in Japanese iconography, symbolising purity.

Wide and shallow containers usually require something to give additional support. Heavier stems can be pushed into a spiked metal flower frog secured to the vessel with tape. Known in Japan as *kenzan*, these devices are used in the Japanese flower-arranging art of *ikebana*. Other stems may benefit from being threaded through a loose nest of chicken wire or pliable twigs. Both options are sustainable and create a more solid base. Always use clean and sharp snips.

Plants

1 *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*
Chinese dogwood is a large, deciduous shrub or small tree that flowers in May and June. Its waxy white bracts form a stiff collar for insignificant looking flowerheads that develop into delicious scarlet fruits by autumn. 4-8m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.
2 *Iris* 'Blue Moon'
The heavily veined bright violet-blue blooms of this Siberian iris are held on elegant stalks late spring-early summer. 80-90cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.
3 *Acer palmatum* This Japanese maple is a small, characterful tree, selected for its leaf shape and vibrant autumn colour. Their restrained elegance – each branch is a study in nuance and poise – make this a valuable foliage plant throughout the summer. 6-10m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

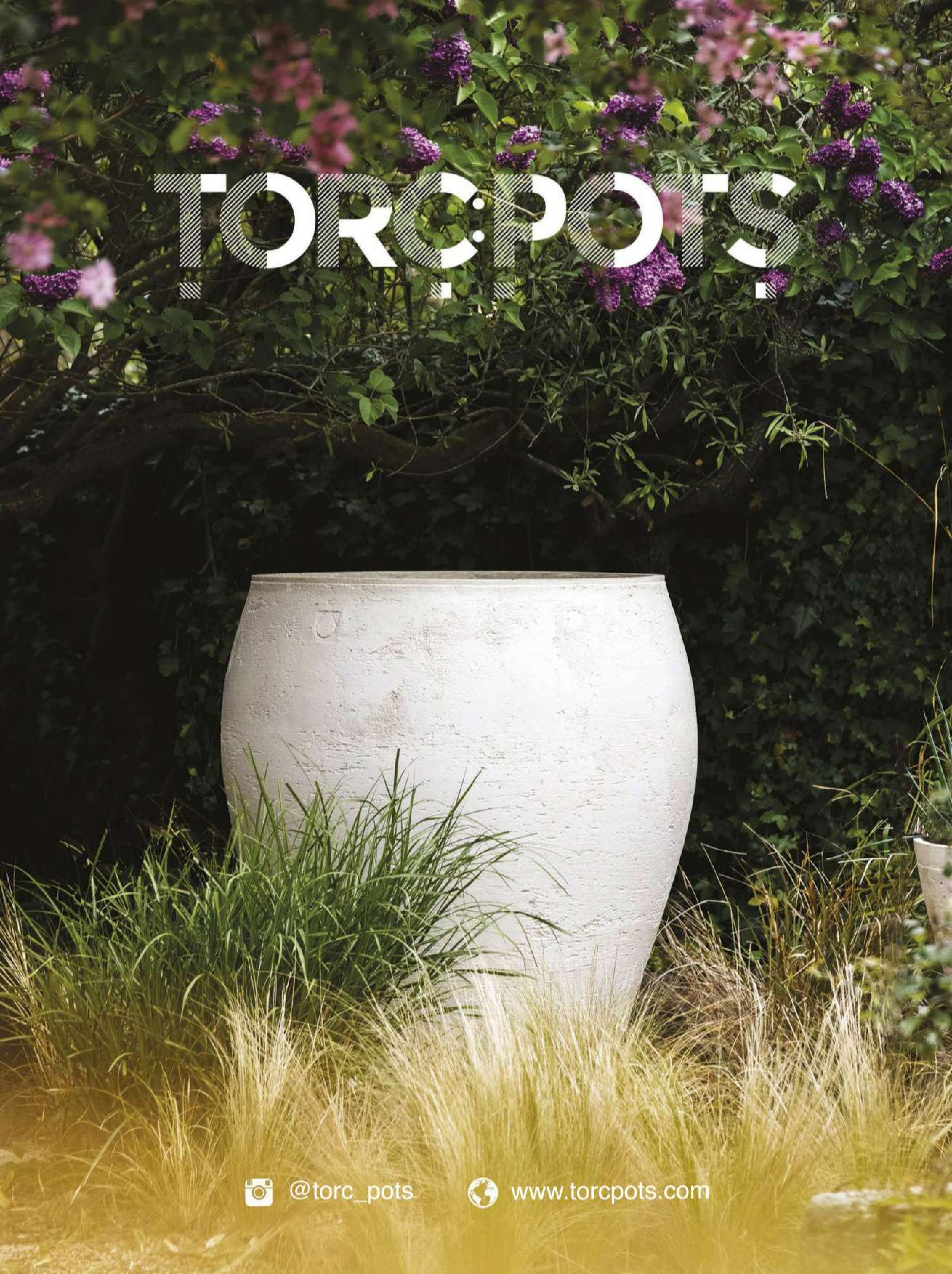
Wild at heart

Fresh flowers can be displayed in anything that holds water, so let your imagination run free. It's liberating to remember that less is often more and to celebrate the winsome beauty of ordinary and readily available plants. There is an uncomplicated joy in gathering a handful of seasonal garden greenery and a few foraged flowers to arrange in a quirky, yet elegant, ceramic pot. Be open to spontaneous improvisation and see what happens; a few additional stems of wild (and free) plant material will ensure the results are inherently seasonal.

Where to buy

For vessels
Cécile Daladier ceciledaladier.com
Charlotte McLeish Ceramics charlottemcleishceramics.bigcartel.com
Jenny Gardner Pottery Via Instagram @jennygardnerpottery
The Shop Floor Project 01229 584537, theshopfloorproject.com
Sophie Conran 03332 401 228, sophieconran.com

For flower frogs and other accessories
Niwaki 01747 445059, niwaki.com
Sarah Raven 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com
Wood & Meadow woodandmeadow.com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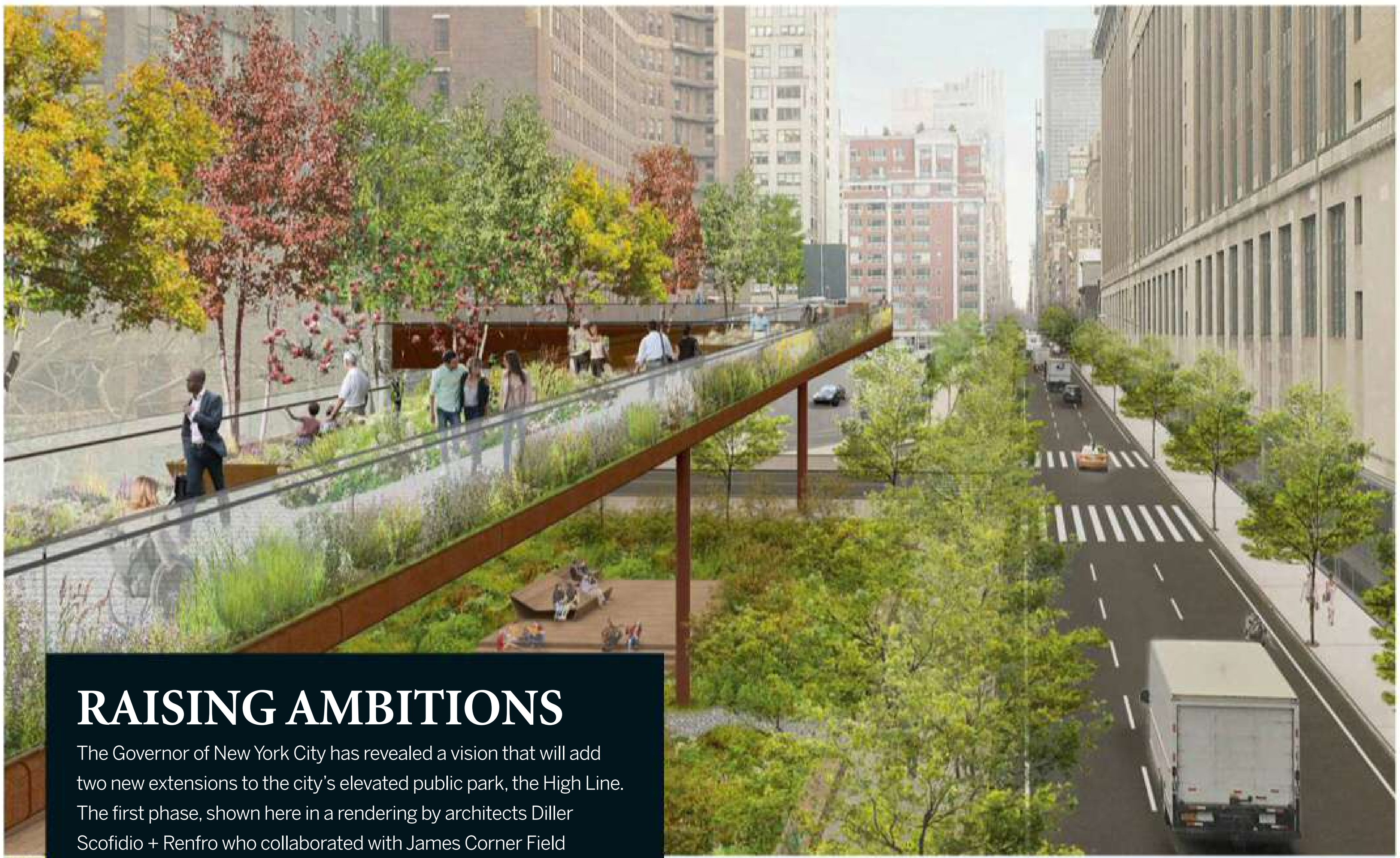
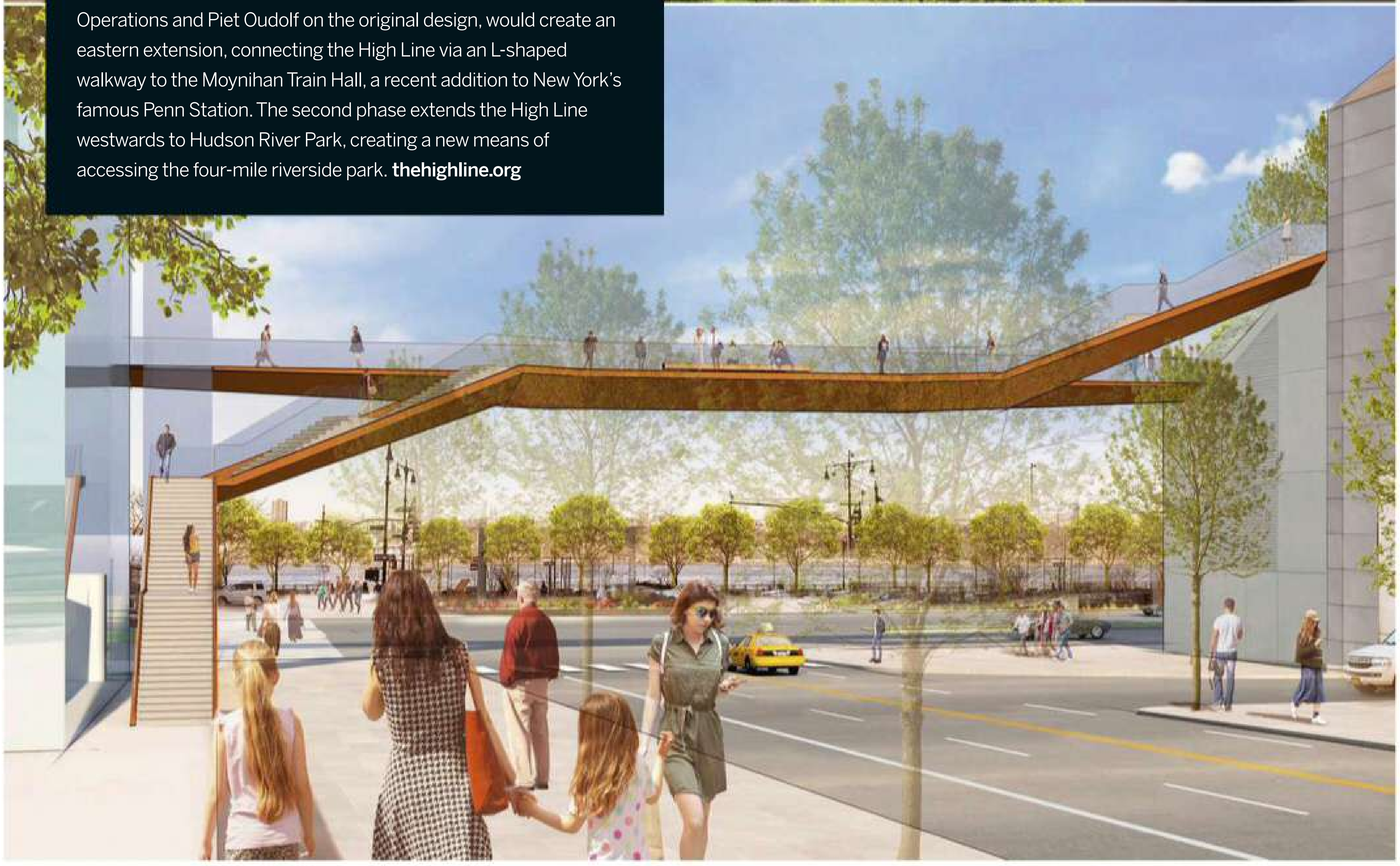


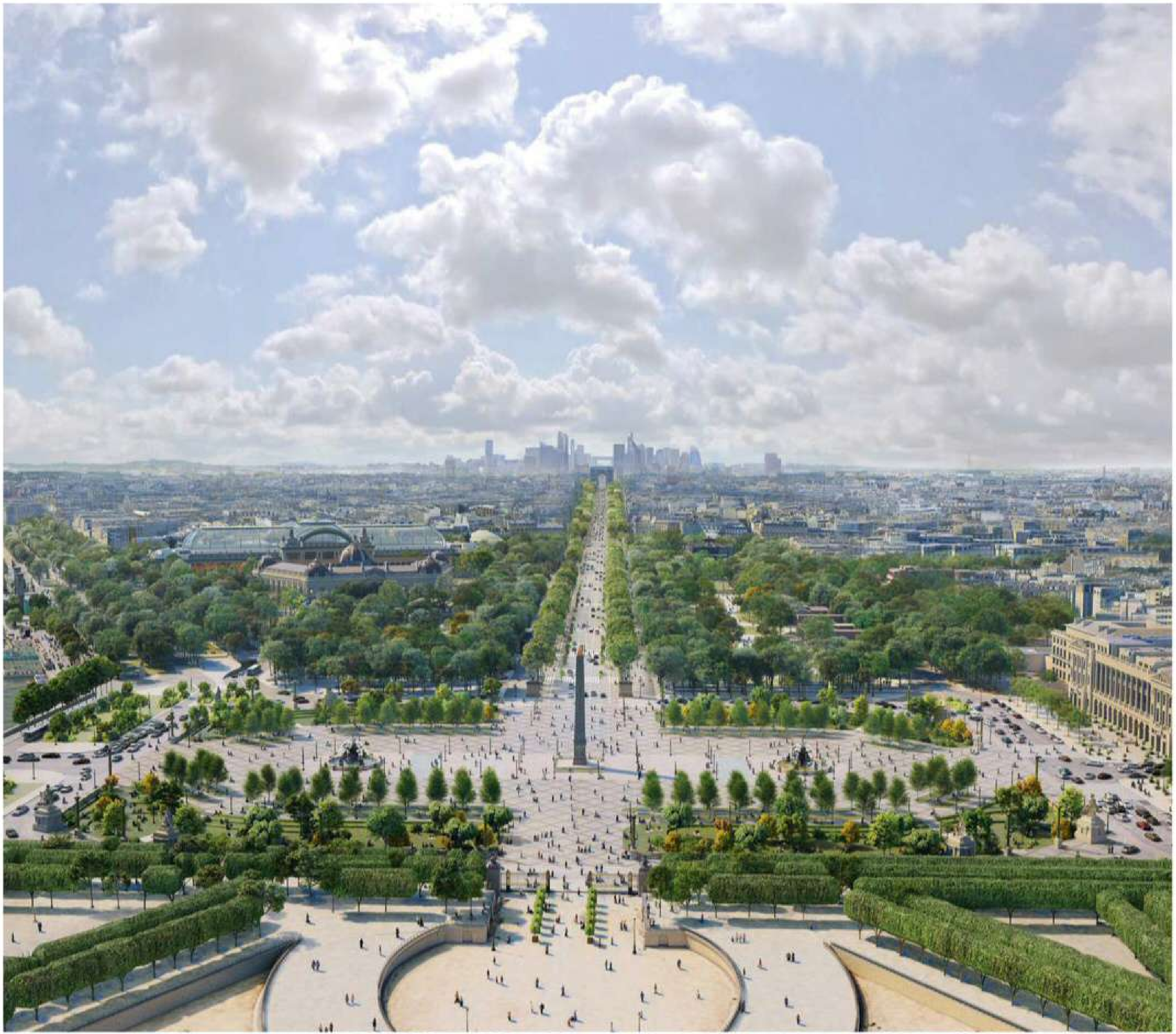
RAISING AMBITIONS

The Governor of New York City has revealed a vision that will add two new extensions to the city's elevated public park, the High Line. The first phase, shown here in a rendering by architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro who collaborated with James Corner Field Operations and Piet Oudolf on the original design, would create an eastern extension, connecting the High Line via an L-shaped walkway to the Moynihan Train Hall, a recent addition to New York's famous Penn Station. The second phase extends the High Line westwards to Hudson River Park, creating a new means of accessing the four-mile riverside park. **thehighline.org**



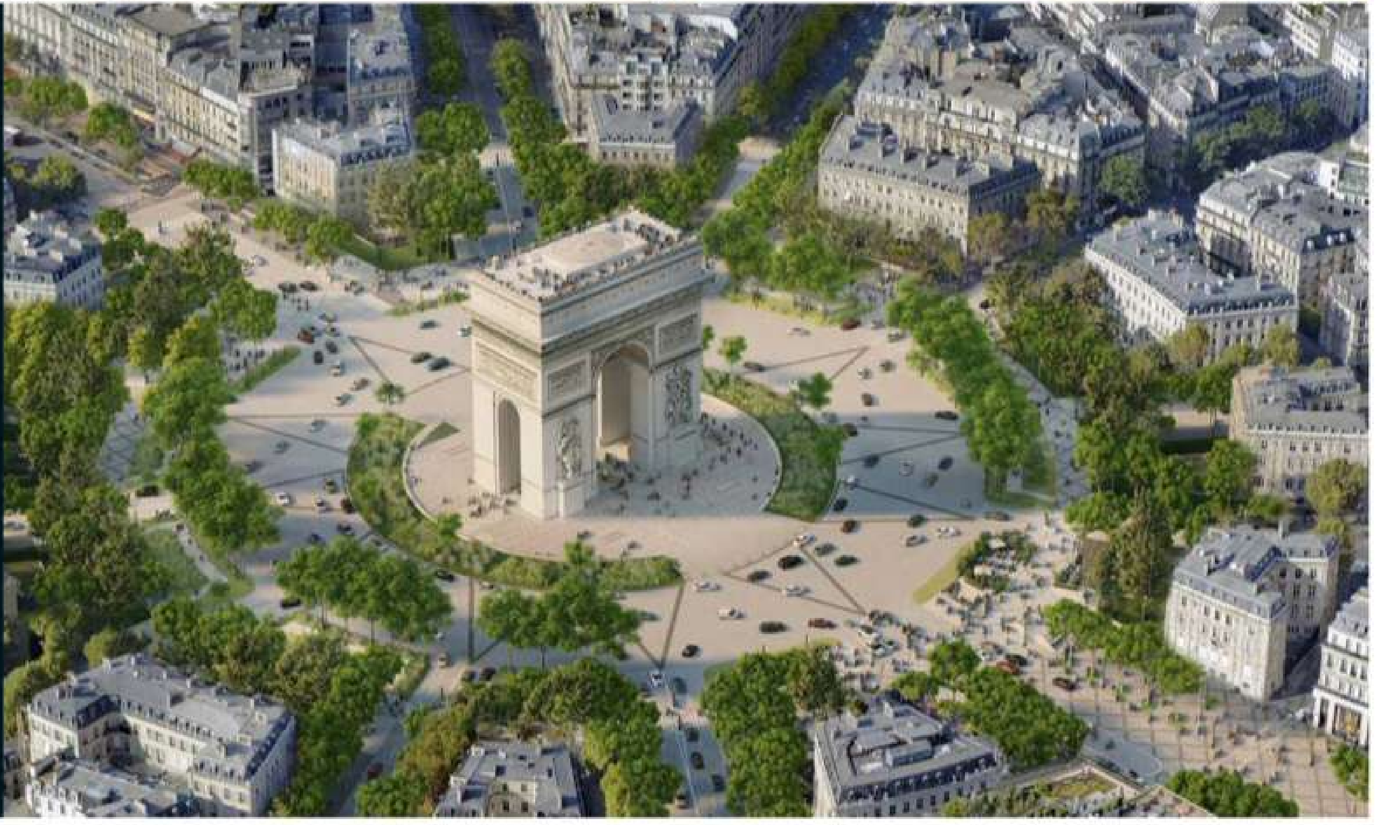
News

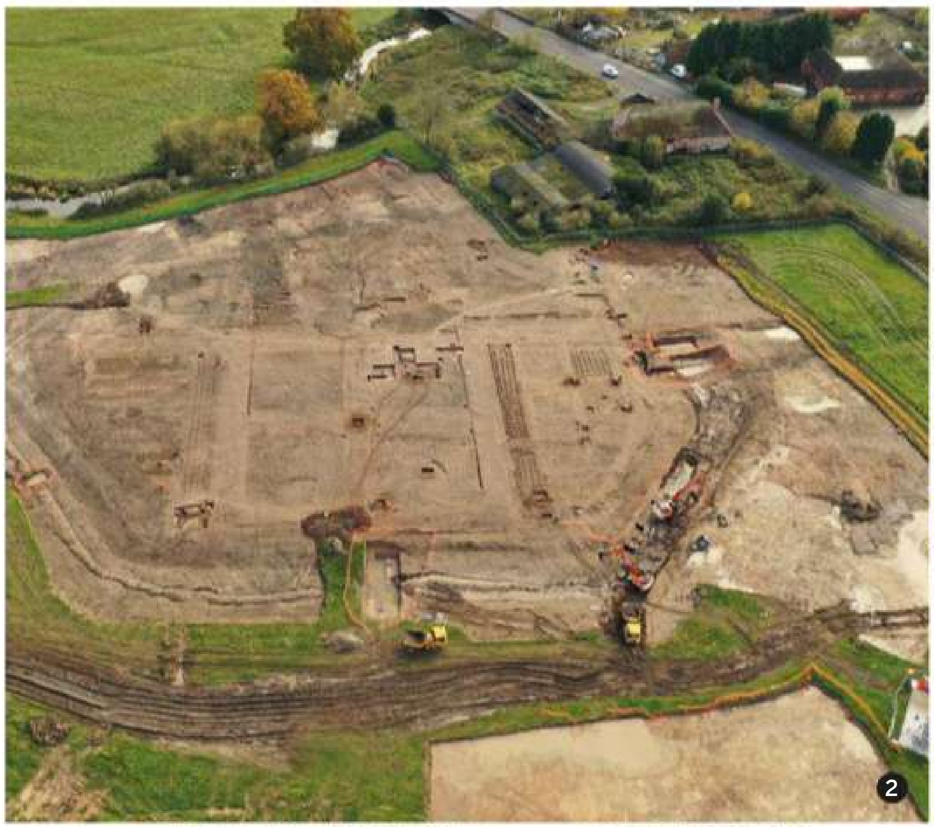
COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

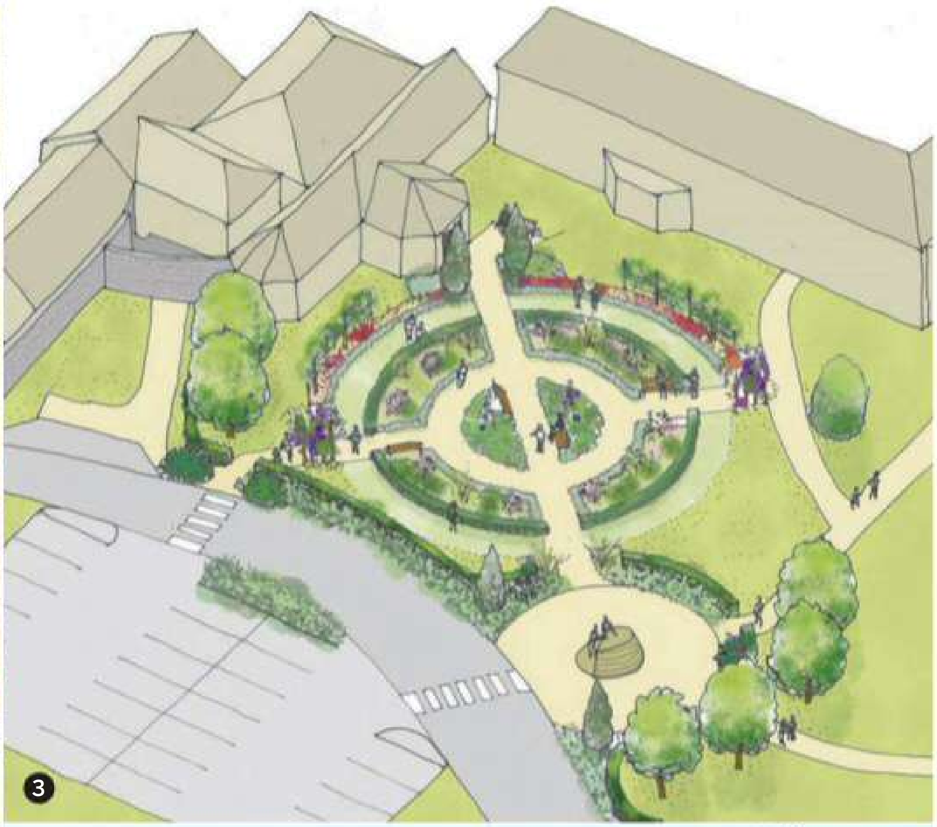


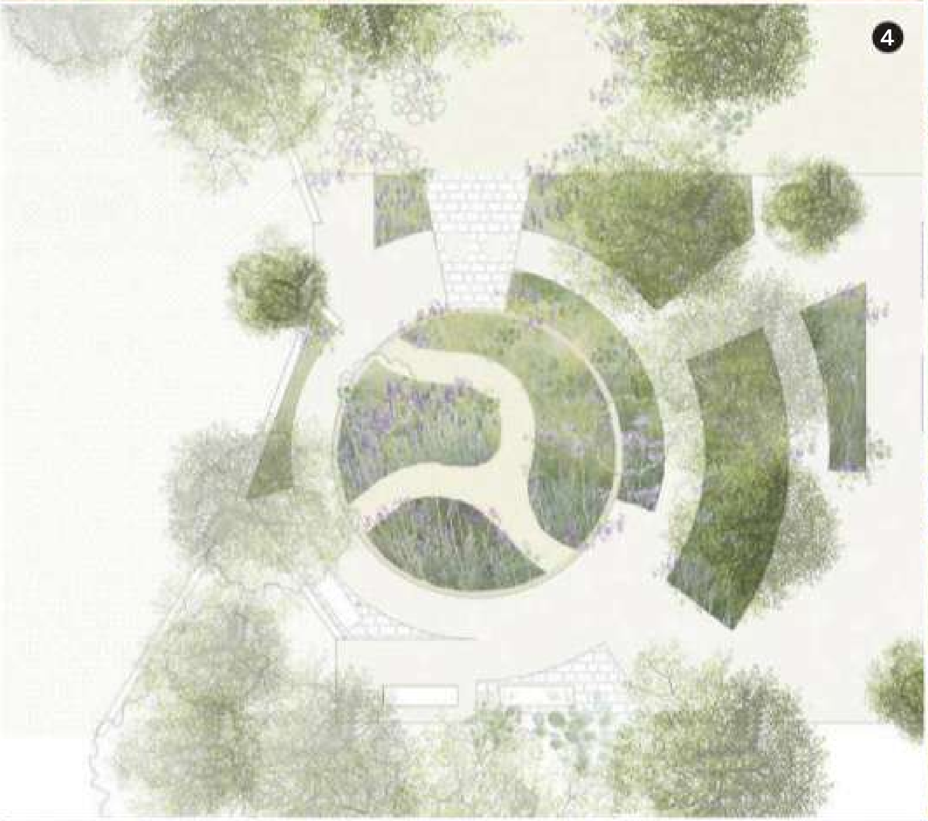
① PARADISE REGAINED

Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris, has revealed an ambitious €250 million plan to transform the Champs-Élysées, the famous avenue that links Place de la Concorde (above) to the Arc de Triomphe (right), into 'an extraordinary garden' by 2030. The scheme, based on a proposal by French studio PCA–Stream, will introduce rows of trees, planted areas for relaxation and meeting places, food kiosks, and low-noise road surfacing all of which will improve air quality along the 1.9km road. Plans are also in place to redesign Place de la Concorde in time for the 2024 Summer Olympics. **pca-stream.com**









② GARDENS REVEALED

Excavations by Wessex Archaeology at the site of the HS2 rail project at Coleshill in Warwickshire have revealed one of the best-preserved, late 16th-century gardens ever discovered in Britain. Coleshill Manor was once home to the Elizabethan courtier Sir Robert Digby, who it's believed rebuilt his house in the modern style, along with huge formal gardens, to show off his wealth and status after marrying an Irish heiress. The outline of the gardens is exceptionally well preserved revealing gravel paths, planting beds, garden pavilion foundations and ornaments organised in a geometric pattern. **wessexarch.co.uk**

③ BISHOP'S PARK

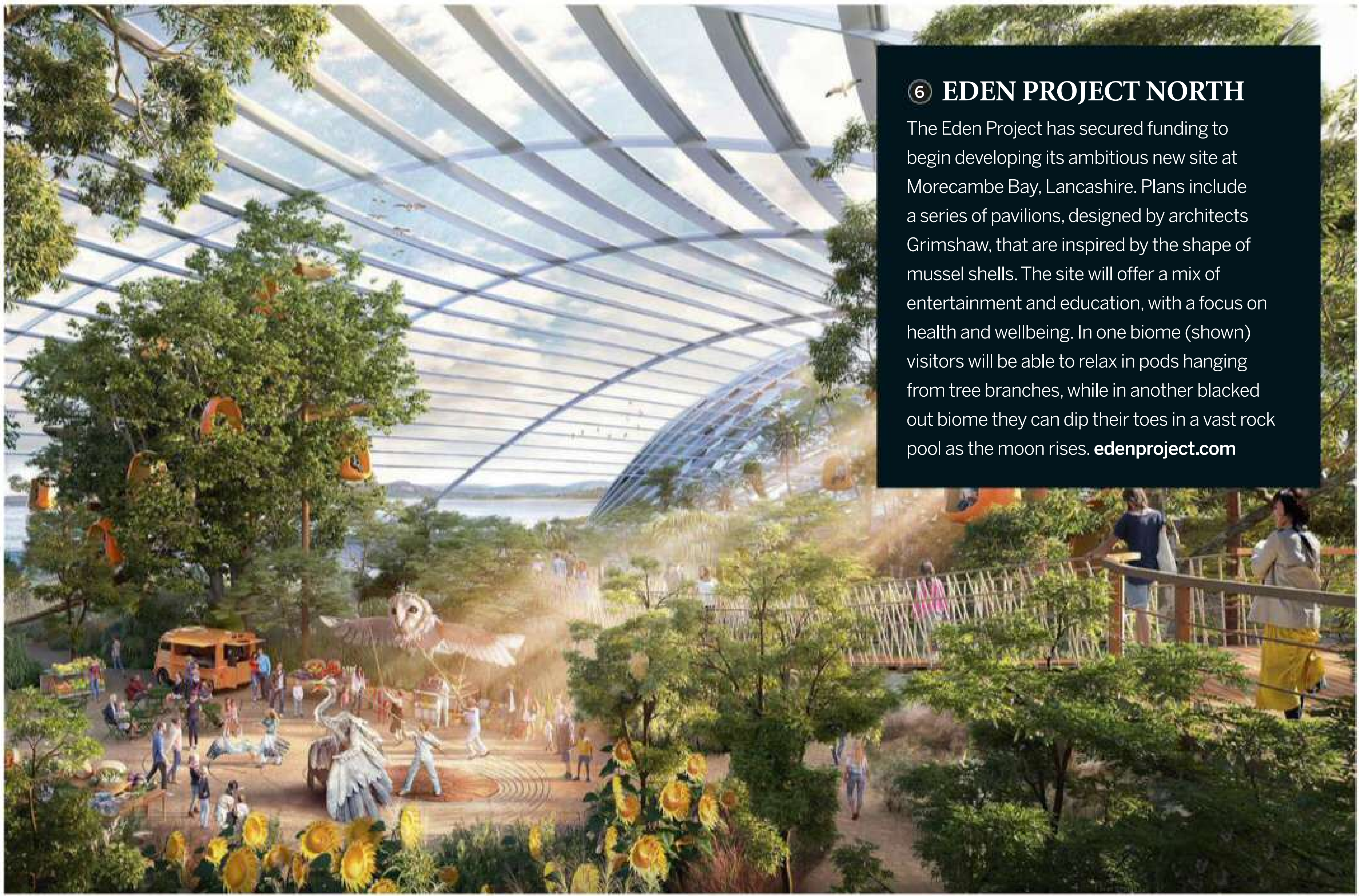
The Tywi Gateway Trust has secured a grant of £22,900 from the Welsh Government and National Lottery Heritage Fund to create two new garden areas at Bishop's Park in Abergwili, Carmarthenshire. At the entrance, a circular garden will be planted with a range of culinary and medicinal herbs, and other plants used in the mid 19th century. Espaliered Welsh heritage apples and pears will frame the garden. A new woodland garden will be created at the edge of the main woodland and will be planted with shrubs, small trees and spring-flowering bulbs that benefit pollinating insects and other wildlife. **tywigateway.org.uk**

④ CALMING SPACE

The first of a series of gardens designed by Jo Thompson for NHS hospitals has been completed at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham University Hospital. Funded by the 11 Foundation, it provides a tranquil space for NHS staff, patients and visitors. Jo developed the design from the existing circular water feature and curving paths. A series of concentric beds are planted with mixes of shrubs, grasses, perennials and bulbs. Scented and aromatic species include roses, lavender and Japanese snowbell. The design for the second NHS Tranquillity Garden, a rooftop garden at Royal London Hospital, is being finalised. **11foundation.co.uk**

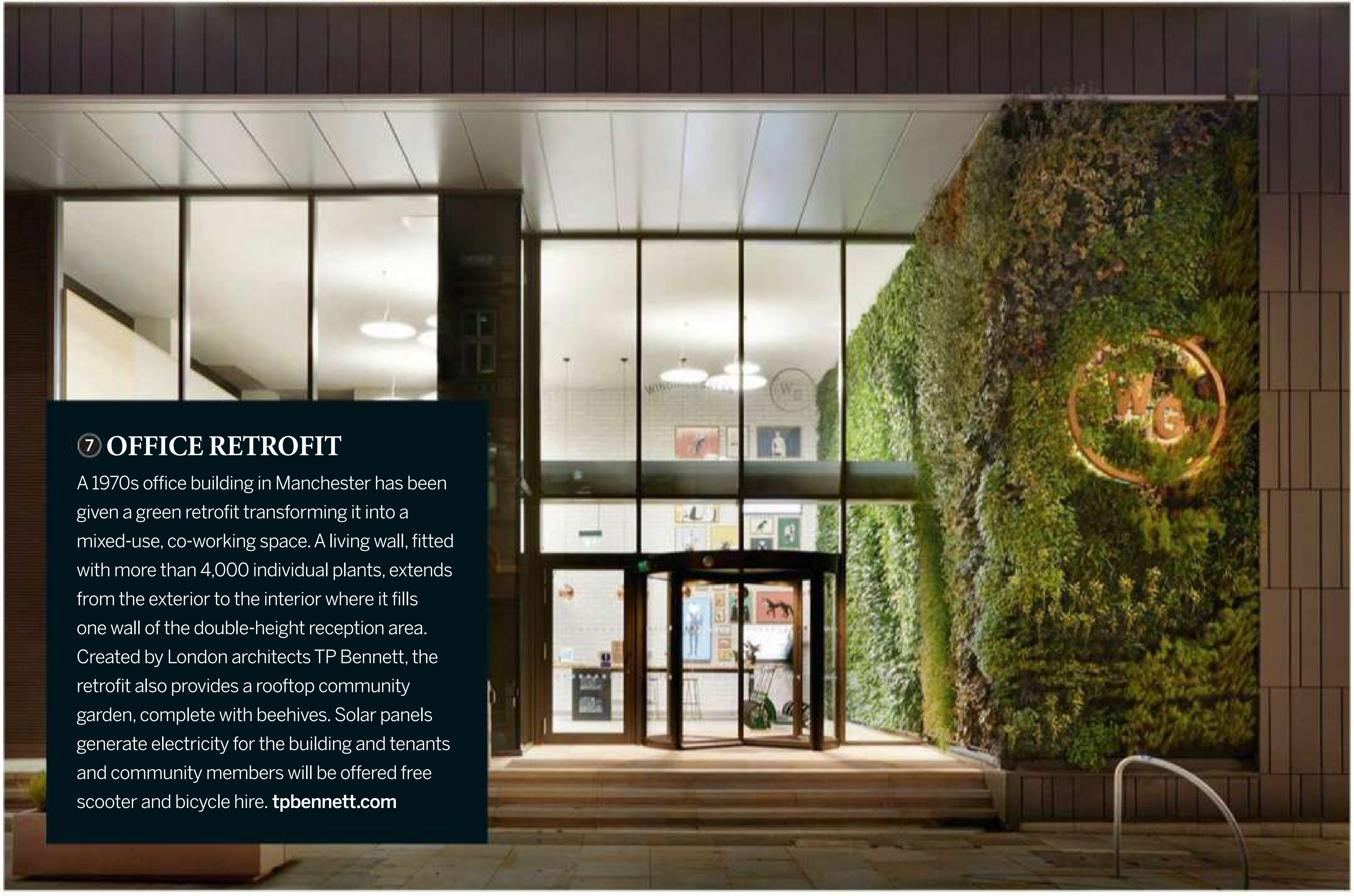
⑤ PARK LIFE

The revised masterplan for a housing development at Stainsby, Middlesbrough has been approved by Middlesbrough Council. The plan, by Gradon Architecture, includes a country park of approximately 74 hectares that will be planted with between 18,000 and 25,000 native trees and shrubs and 1.6km of new, species-rich, native hedgerow. It enhances and extends existing habitats, such as Mandale Meadow, and will create a wide range of new ones. More than 1,600 homes will be set within landscaped grounds, with orchards, play and sports facilities, and a proposed community hub and visitor centre. **middlesbrough.gov.uk**



⑥ EDEN PROJECT NORTH

The Eden Project has secured funding to begin developing its ambitious new site at Morecambe Bay, Lancashire. Plans include a series of pavilions, designed by architects Grimshaw, that are inspired by the shape of mussel shells. The site will offer a mix of entertainment and education, with a focus on health and wellbeing. In one biome (shown) visitors will be able to relax in pods hanging from tree branches, while in another blacked out biome they can dip their toes in a vast rock pool as the moon rises. **edenproject.com**



⑦ OFFICE RETROFIT

A 1970s office building in Manchester has been given a green retrofit transforming it into a mixed-use, co-working space. A living wall, fitted with more than 4,000 individual plants, extends from the exterior to the interior where it fills one wall of the double-height reception area. Created by London architects TP Bennett, the retrofit also provides a rooftop community garden, complete with beehives. Solar panels generate electricity for the building and tenants and community members will be offered free scooter and bicycle hire. **tpbennett.com**

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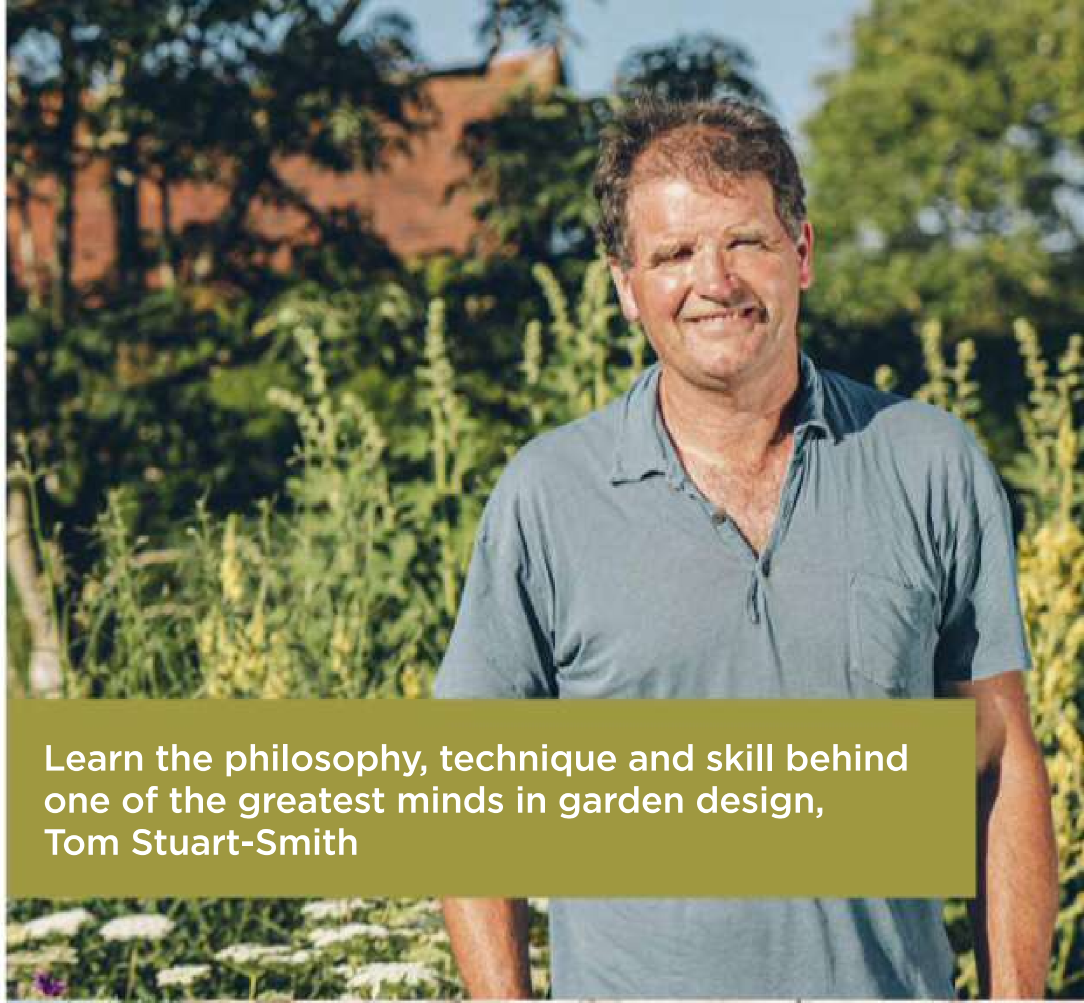
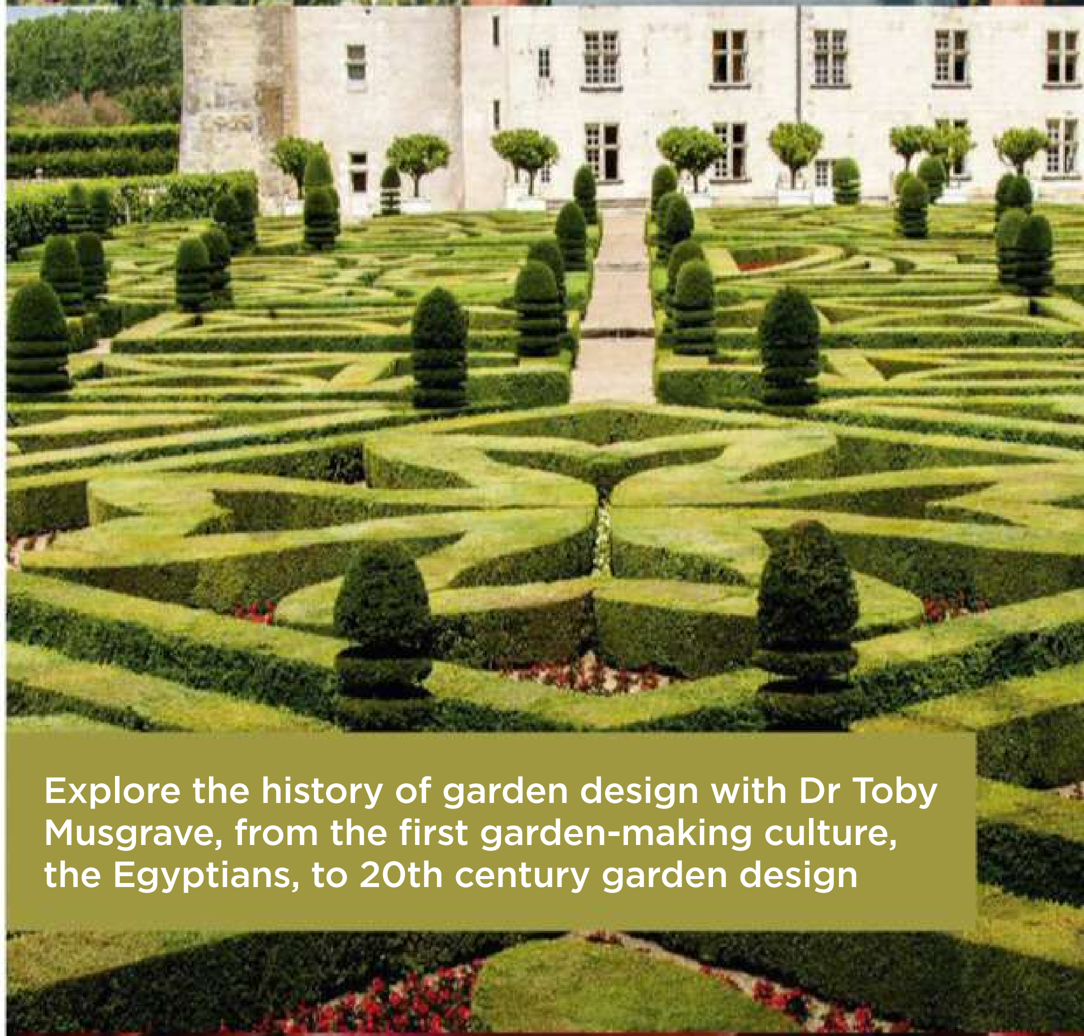
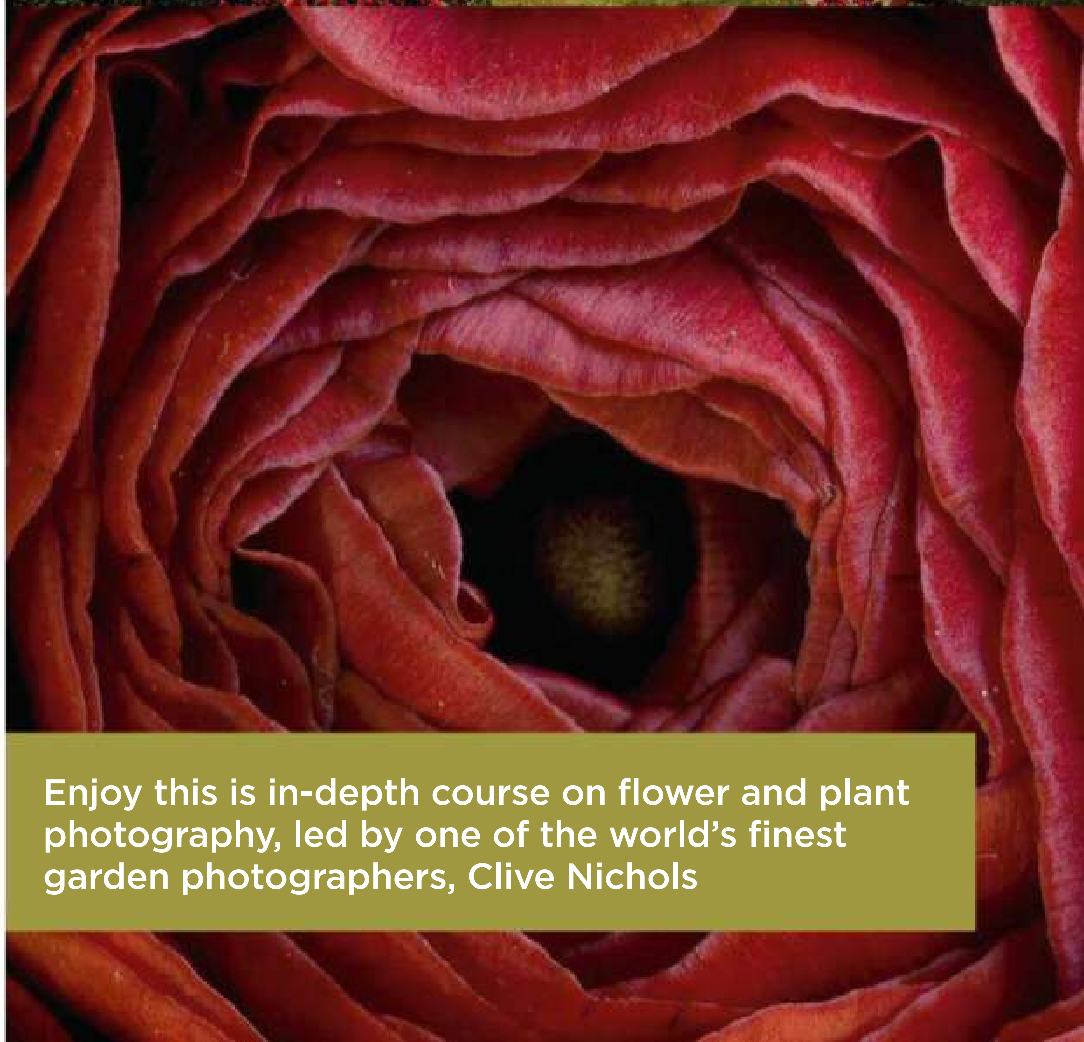


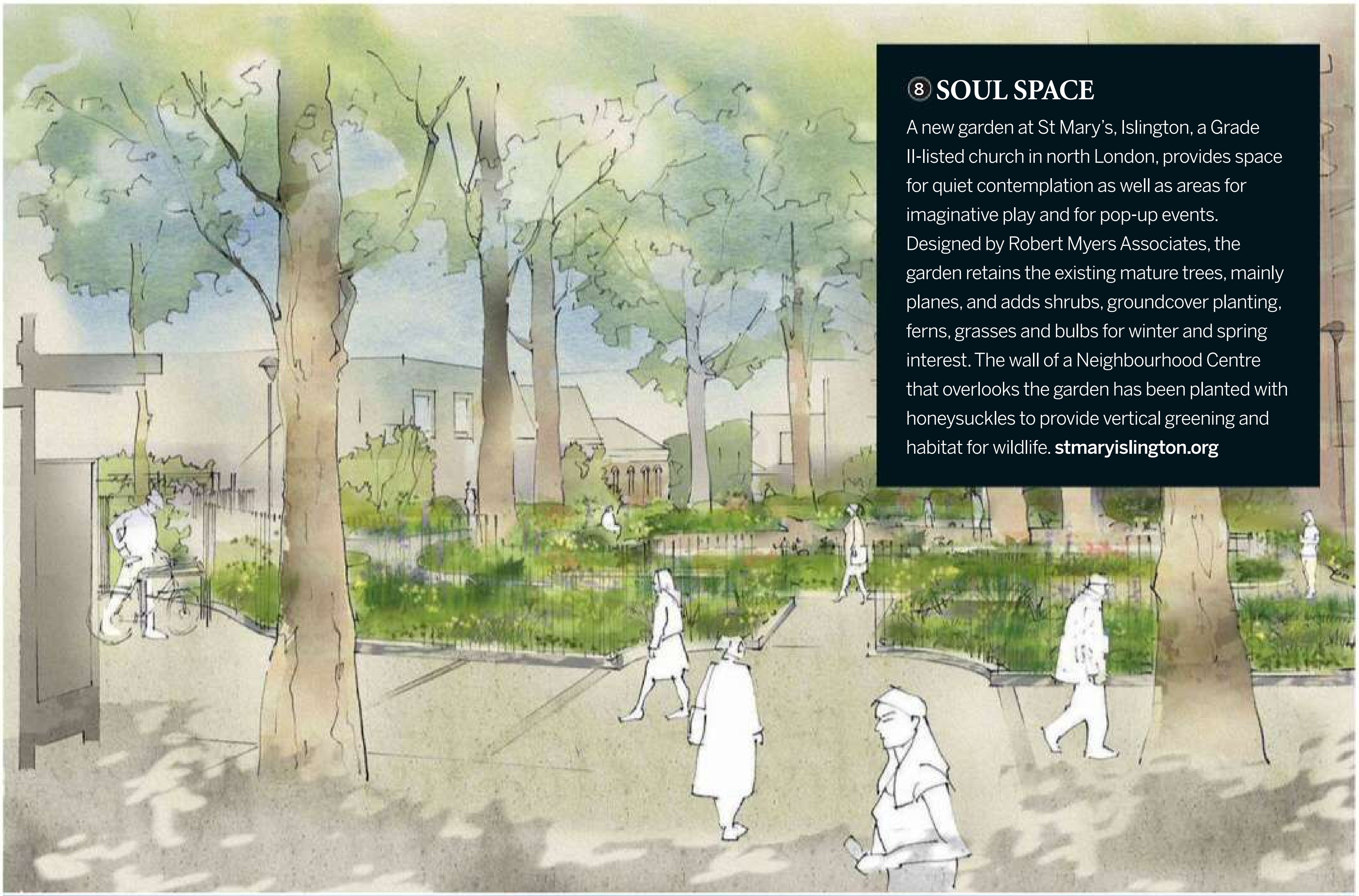
Learn the philosophy, technique and skill behind one of the greatest minds in garden design, Tom Stuart-Smith



Explore the history of garden design with Dr Toby Musgrave, from the first garden-making culture, the Egyptians, to 20th century garden design

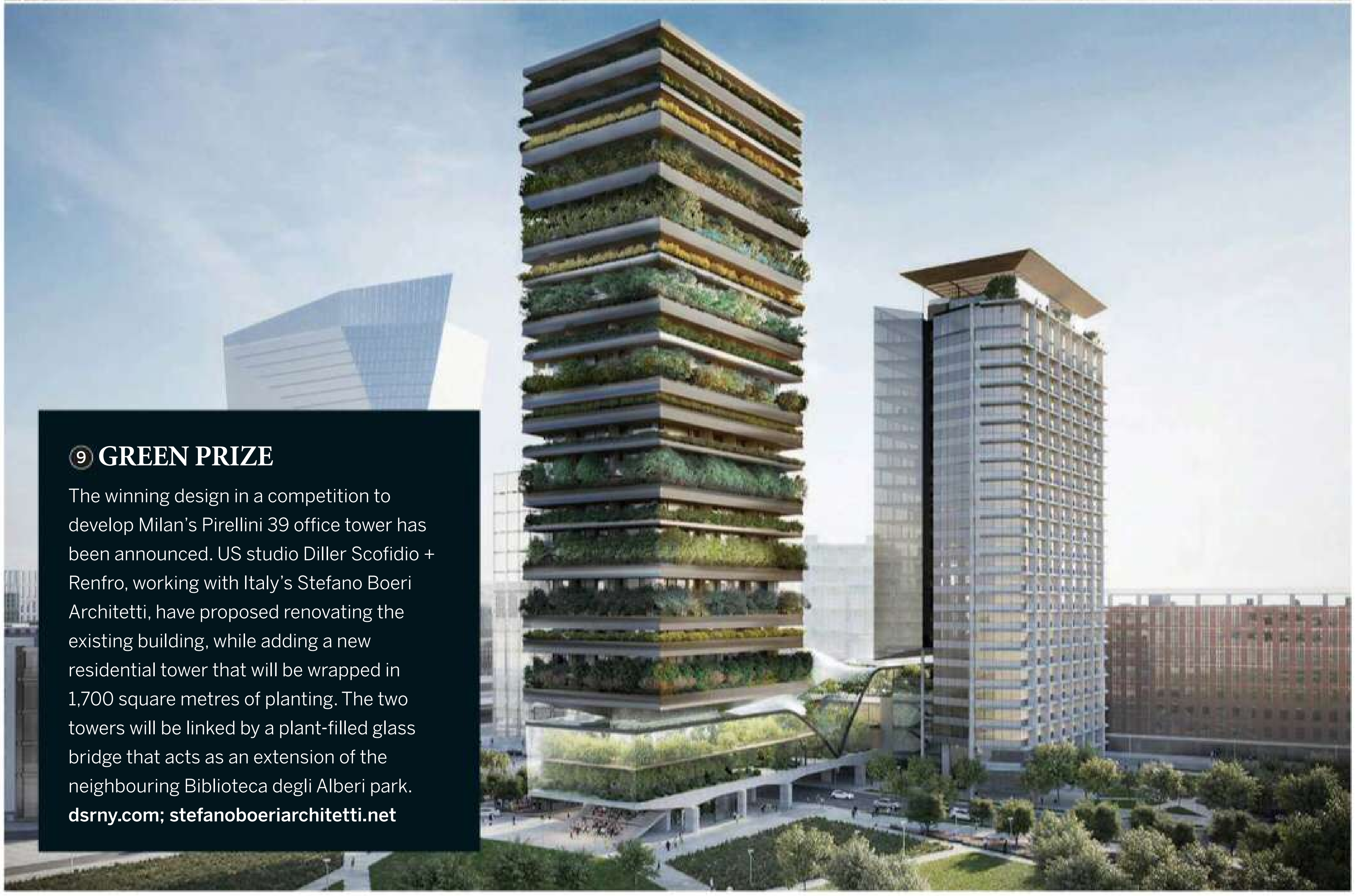


Enjoy this is in-depth course on flower and plant photography, led by one of the world's finest garden photographers, Clive Nichols



⑧ SOUL SPACE

A new garden at St Mary's, Islington, a Grade II-listed church in north London, provides space for quiet contemplation as well as areas for imaginative play and for pop-up events. Designed by Robert Myers Associates, the garden retains the existing mature trees, mainly planes, and adds shrubs, groundcover planting, ferns, grasses and bulbs for winter and spring interest. The wall of a Neighbourhood Centre that overlooks the garden has been planted with honeysuckles to provide vertical greening and habitat for wildlife. **stmaryislington.org**



⑨ GREEN PRIZE

The winning design in a competition to develop Milan's Pirellini 39 office tower has been announced. US studio Diller Scofidio + Renfro, working with Italy's Stefano Boeri Architetti, have proposed renovating the existing building, while adding a new residential tower that will be wrapped in 1,700 square metres of planting. The two towers will be linked by a plant-filled glass bridge that acts as an extension of the neighbouring Biblioteca degli Alberi park. **dsrny.com; stefanoboeriarchitetti.net**

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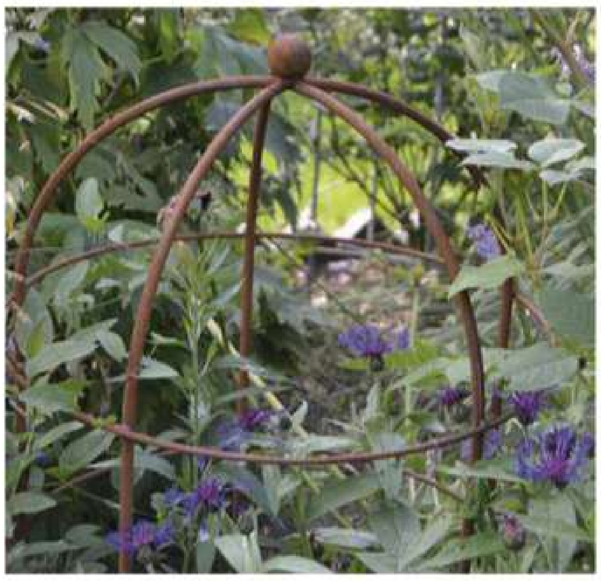
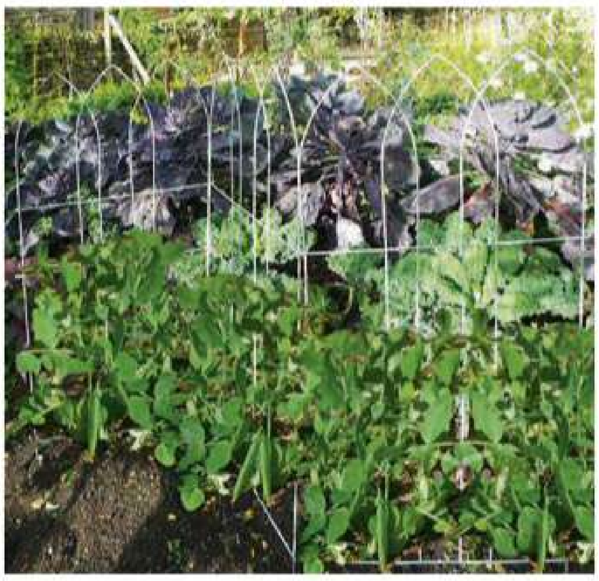
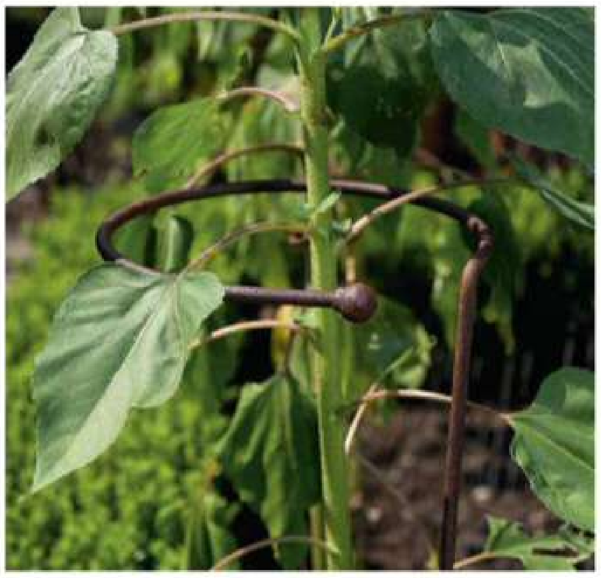


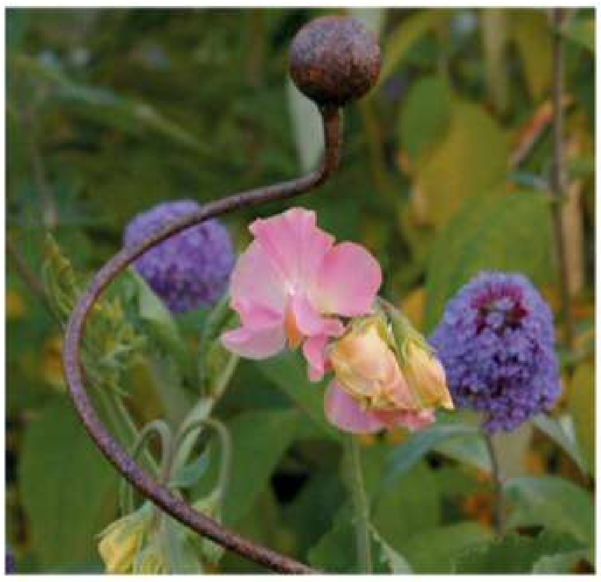
RUSTIC STYLE
Rusted Finish Lobster Pot,
H 90cm x D 60cm, from £80, Artisan Plant Supports,
01538 753128, artisanplantsupports.co.uk



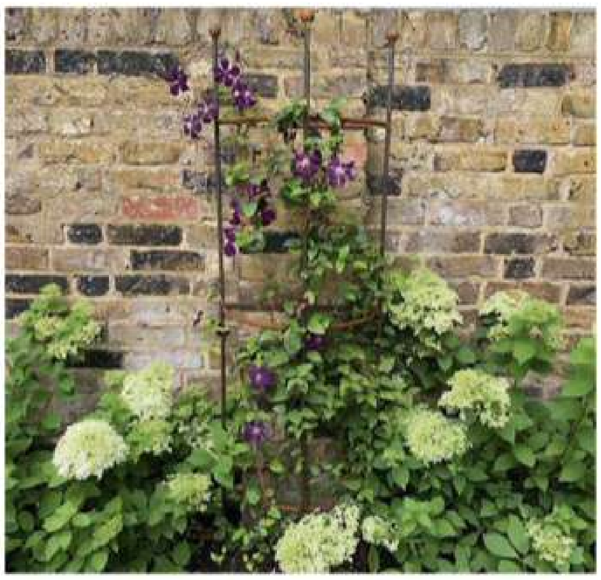
DELICATE DESIGN
Elegance Pea Frame, set of 3 panels, sage green,
H 1m x W 45cm, £49, Agriframes,
0117 934 1790, agriframes.co.uk



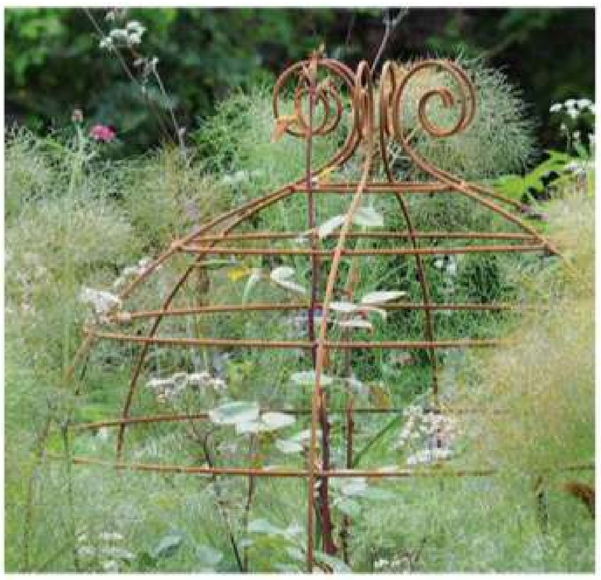
WRAP AROUND
Wrap Around Plant Support, set of 3, rust,
£30, Harrod Horticultural,
0333 400 6400, harrodhorticultural.com



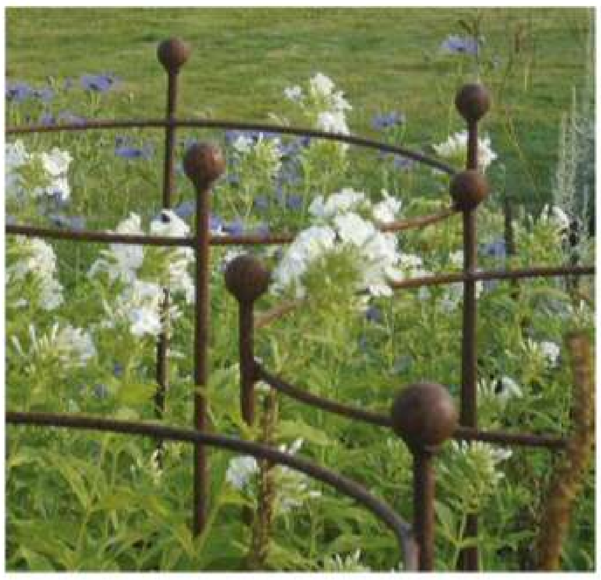
MODERN TWIST
Rusted Spiral, set of 3,
H 1.5m, £56.50, Leander,
01773 550495, leanderplantsupports.co.uk



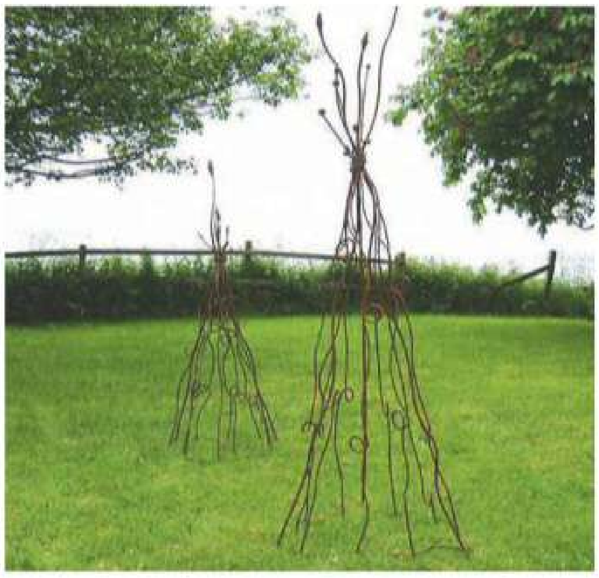
WALL SUPPORT
Clematis Wall Support,
H 1.5m x W 45cm x D 23cm, £155, Muntons,
01285 706511, muntons.net



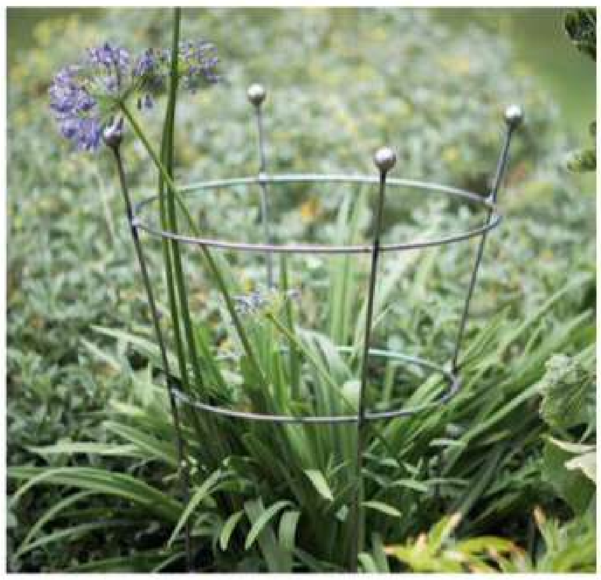
HERITAGE
Grande George Belle,
H 1m x D 80cm, £62, Plant Belles,
01363 84514, plantbelles.co.uk



SIMPLE SHAPE
Ball Topped Parallel Cone,
H 1.27m x D 40cm, £42.78, Plant Supports,
01584 781578, plantsupports.co.uk



FUNCTIONAL SCULPTURE
Sculptural Obelisk,
H 2.4m x D 90cm, £335 to £390, Straysparks,
07729 422657, straysparks.com



SILVER TONE
Barrington Flared Plant Support, large,
H 85cm x D 65cm, £55, Garden Trading,
01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk

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DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, back issues, crossword, competition, a weekend in…

The high summer borders at the National Trust garden at Mottistone Manor on the Isle of Wight, provide a masterclass in creating a mixed border in *The National Trust School of Gardening* by Rebecca Bevan, reviewed on page 113.

CHRIS LACEY / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

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January – March 2022
Based at the Chelsea Physic Garden and led by Rosemary Alexander and architect Catriona Rowbotham, the course is an overview of Garden Design, covering all the elements needed to rethink an average garden. Taking students step by step through site surveying, using the grid, horizontal and vertical features, garden layouts and planting plans, costing and specification, plus drawing tuition and homework on design and plant portfolios. Tutors are well respected in the industry and will guide students on how to succeed in this diverse profession.
(2 days a week (Wed & Thu), 10.30am–3.15pm, plus 2 days homework)

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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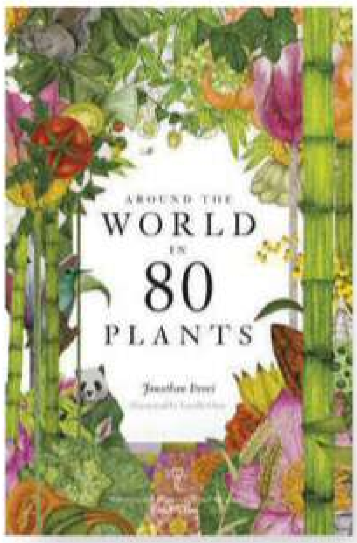
BOOK REVIEWS



AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 PLANTS

by Jonathan Drori,
Illustrations by Lucille Clerc

Laurence King Publishing, £20
ISBN 978-1786272300

An enlightening introduction to the human relationship with 80 important plants, delivered in an entertaining and accessible manner.

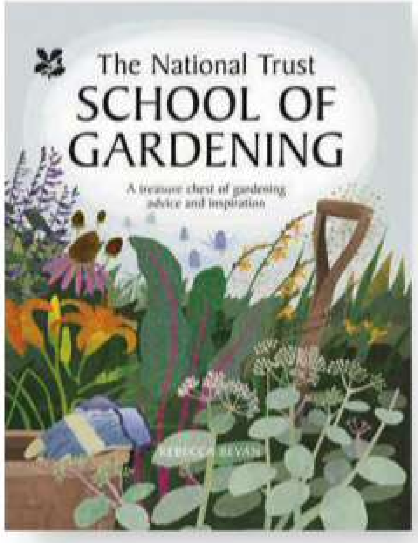
Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener

Everything ancient has an interesting 'back story' and when it comes to the relationship between plants and people, the story goes back millennia. This personal selection of 80 significant wild and cultivated plants from around the world explores that ongoing association. Some, such as nettles are familiar, others, such as kuki, or candlenut tree, are less so, but as the text hops between countries and skips between climates and cultures, the overall message is resoundingly clear: the past and future of plants and humankind are inextricably entwined.

The book is lively, entertaining and educational and the author's personal comments and witty asides, often made me laugh out loud. It is a credit to his skill and dedication that every fact-filled sentence is rich in information about each chosen plant, be it ethnobotanical, economic, folklore, myth, history, religion, culinary or etymology – not a word is wasted. There are numerous interesting factoids; we learn how bamboo was an important element in Edison's light-bulb moment, the lotus leaf has inspired the manufacture of modern materials, plus more sinister uses of plants, such as in the interrogation methods used by Mussolini's fascists. At the conclusion you will be armed with enough interesting information to initiate conversation at a thousand dinner parties.

Lucille Clerc's astonishingly beautiful, vibrantly coloured illustrations are an absolute delight, summing up the key points about each plant perfectly – you will find humour in these, too.

This book has a broad appeal, especially to a lover of art and plants. It would make a fabulous gift, yet contains enough facts to be of benefit to students of plant sciences, it is also a must have for anyone who guides at a public garden or has an interest in the relationship between plants and people in the past, present and future.



THE NATIONAL TRUST SCHOOL OF GARDENING

by Rebecca Bevan

Pavilion Books, £20
ISBN 978-1911657156

An in-depth practical gardening book that will easily earn its keep on your bookshelf, useful for novice and experienced gardeners alike.

Reviewer Hannah Gardner is a horticulturist.

The National Trust School of Gardening is a straight-talking and yet decorative book examining the craft of gardening. This up-to-date, meticulously researched resource draws on the expertise of some of the Trust's 500 professional garden staff, and gets to the nuts and bolts of successful horticulture.

Author Rebecca Bevan, a horticultural adviser, researcher and gardener has undoubtedly done many of these tasks herself. She de-mystifies complex projects such as creating and maintaining a vegetable patch and clearly explains design concepts. The text is accessible and comprehensive but not unnecessarily technical.

Twelve expansive chapters cover everyday aspects of gardening, offering guidance on creating a garden from scratch, through to the finesse of a dedicated cut flower area. A National Trust garden is examined as a case study for each topic, the head gardeners revealing valuable insights into their gardens and methods. Several pages of practical advice neatly broken down with subheadings follow. I enjoyed the range of images; illustrative photographs, clear diagrams right where you need them and beautiful illustrations by Madeleine Smith. Sissinghurst is considered for its climbers, appropriately given its network of mellow brick walls and extensive plant collection while a study of topiary and hedges takes us to The Courts in Wiltshire.

Published by The National Trust, this book shines a light on the traditional skills of gardening but crucially it frames this within an awareness of ecology and sustainable gardening. Recognising the role that domestic gardens have in boosting biodiversity there are details of species to look out for and how to best support their needs. The final chapter considers reducing dependence on resources such as peat and water and repurposing existing materials.

HERB: A COOK'S COMPANION

by Mark Diacono

Quadrille Publishing, £26
ISBN 978-1787136359

A book that is sure to inspire anyone who is thinking about starting to grow their own herbs this year to add a little extra flavour to their cooking.

Reviewer Aaron Bertelsen is Great Dixter's gardener cook.

With *Herb: A Cook's Companion*, Mark Diacono has succeeded in hitting just the right note for gardeners and non-gardeners alike. This is clearly a book written by someone with their hands in the soil, but who also has a gift for explaining the principles of cultivation in a clear, no-nonsense way – as well as a real passion for herbs.

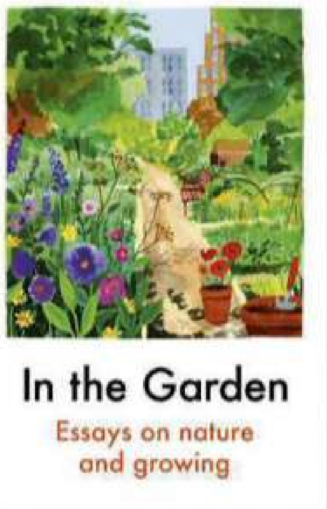
The book starts with the basics: understanding the conditions in your garden or yard, deciding what to grow, sowing, propagating and maintenance. It then moves to the kitchen, explaining how to treat and store herbs to get the best out of them, including by making herb salts and sugars, butters, oils and syrups.

Growing guides provide more detailed information about a huge range of individual herbs from the everyday to exotica, such as bergamot, chocolate mint, anise hyssop and shiso, with clever lists alongside of which foods each herb has an affinity with.

If you are like me, by now, you will be starting to dream about all these exciting new flavours and what you are going to make to show them off at their best. The recipes – from chutneys and spice blends to substantial main courses and puddings – are fresh and distinctive, and put the flavours of the herbs front and centre. I cannot wait to try the Roman herb and anchovy salad, or the fig leaf and lemon verbena rice pudding, and the herby egg mayo on toast is just the sort of simple, satisfying dish I like for lunch after a hard morning's work in the garden.

This is a genuinely intriguing and inspiring book. Diacono's enthusiasm is infectious, and his desire to share the pleasure herbs can bring to the garden and the table shines through.

With so many people now interested in growing their own food, this book really has come at the perfect time. I wish it every success.



IN THE GARDEN: ESSAYS ON NATURE AND GROWING

by Niellah Arboine et al

Daunt Books, £9.99
ISBN 978-1911547921

A fascinating and beautifully written series of essays that explores the challenge and charm of various authors' very individual gardening experiences.

Reviewer Naomi Slade is a writer and designer.

This is a book of autobiographies in microcosm; a collection of essays written by people for whom the garden is a growth experience, balm, salvation, escape and much more.

Gardening is a personal thing and the stories are short and sweet: tales of inspiration and delight; individual perspectives and life journeys to be experienced by the reader briefly and fleetingly. The juxtaposition of voices somehow more poignant than a single, longer narrative would be.

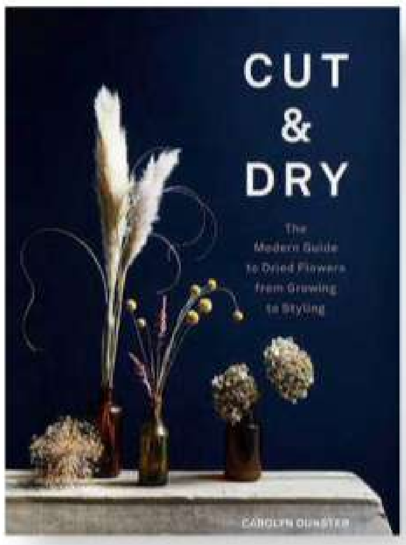
The stories, divided into themed sections, counterpoint each other, expose both fundamental differences and common elements, like acts in an opera. It highlights social and racial inequalities and different levels of experience, yet it also reveals the equality inherent in the act of growing – it is a leveller, a commonality.

There is a fascinatingly pervasive sense of understanding, too. Of society and life lived from Penelope Lively; of the essence of what it is to be – to feel – a gardener in the case of Jamaica Kincaid. Paul Mendez addressing heritage, coming of age, sexuality and religion through the medium of plants. Claire Lowdon's energising exploration of language and growing annuals, and the dreamy, poetic, intellectual, biological meditation on alkanet from Daisy Lafarge.

I found this book joyous in many ways. There is its international, culturally diverse flavour and its social scope. There is the chance to meet new writers and appreciate freshly those you knew already. The quality of the writing and the exquisite clarity of expression is tinglingly good, while the opportunity to revel pleasurably in language feels almost illicit.

This is not really a book about gardening, therefore, so much as the experience of gardening. It is an unpretentious and intelligent collection ponderings, and it is fresh, invigorating and thoroughly enjoyable.

BOOK REVIEWS



CUT & DRY: THE MODERN GUIDE TO DRIED FLOWERS FROM GROWING TO STYLING

by Carolyn Dunster

Laurence King Publishing , £17.99
ISBN 978-1786278890

A beautifully presented, essential guide to knowing, growing, cutting, drying and styling your own dried flower specimens and arrangements.

Reviewer Sonya Patel Ellis is a writer and artist.

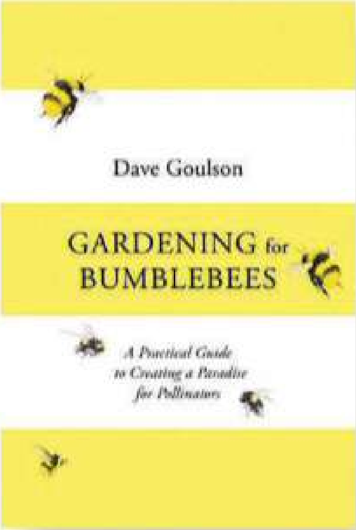
If dried flowers were once associated with a dusty corner of a room, Carolyn Dunster's beautiful homage to the ephemerality of plants and flowers very much brings them back into the modern, stylish home. Whether you're a floral designer, enjoy crafting with botanicals or are seeking to add colour and texture to your abode, *Cut & Dry: The Modern Guide to Dried Flowers from Growing to Styling* is both valuable reference guide and covetable coffee table tome.

Dried flowers look best when styled against a simple backdrop, devoid of clutter and with definitive editing, which *Cut & Dry* does perfectly. By presenting each specimen or arrangement against largely minimalistic backgrounds, natural forms in various stages of preservation or decay are given space they need. It's a thoroughly modern guide but one that should stand the test of time thanks to its choice words, sharp design and selective imagery by Ida Riveros.

Floristry, botanical styling, planting design and garden writing are all in a day's work for Dunster and this holistic approach to dried flowers shines through. In chapters on The Best Plants for Drying, How to Grow Your Own, Drying Methods, Styling and Projects to Try Yourself, each papery bloom, sculptural seedhead, feathery grass or turning stem of foliage is intimately described from a gardener's as well as an artist's perspective.

This is key: dried flowers are all about seasonality so the more you become acquainted with the life cycles and characteristics of plants and flowers – how strawflowers grow, how love-in-a-mist seedheads mature or how hydrangea petals antique or the best time to collect aromatic herbs – the more intuitive you can be in your designs.

Inspiring dried flower arrangements are presented at the back of the book after the real star of the show: how to know, grow, cut and dry your own flowers.



GARDENING FOR BUMBLEBEES: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO CREATING A PARADISE FOR POLLINATORS

by Dave Goulson

Square Peg, £16.99
ISBN 978-1529110289

From nepeta to nesting holes, leading bumblebee expert Dave Goulson inspires gardeners to lend bumblebees and other pollinators a helping hand.

Catherine Smalley is an editor and nature writer.

Dave Goulson is founder of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and has been studying bumblebee ecology for nearly 30 years, so it's fair to say he knows his onions (or pollinator-friendly plants) when it comes to helping this much-loved fuzzy garden visitor.

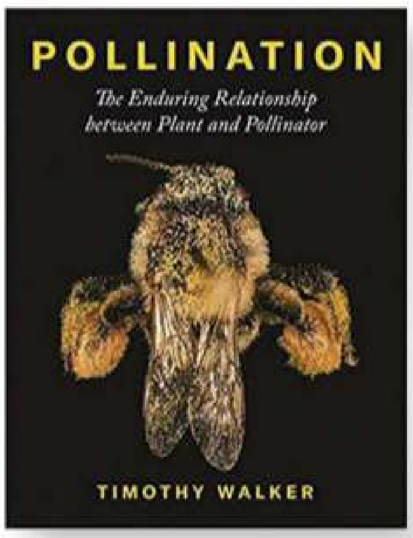
It's not news that bumblebees and other pollinators are in dire straits. Nearly all our hay meadows disappeared in the twentieth century, thousands of miles of hedgerows were dug up, and those wildflowers that remain are "often contaminated with cocktails of insecticides," says Goulson. Our 22 million UK gardens could offer a lifeline.

Flick straight to chapter seven for planting advice. Steer clear of double flowers and popular bedding plants that are "pretty hopeless for pollinators" and instead opt for cottage-garden flowers or, even better, wildflowers. Suitable plants are grouped alphabetically by family and accompanied by a star rating – *Hydrangea serratifolia*, blue tansy and catmint are among those given five stars (superb for hungry insects) – and each species is illustrated with a photograph.

Some might find the lumping together of annuals, biennials and perennials confusing, but there's also a handy year planner that makes it easy to fill in any seasonal gaps in your bumblebee banquet at a glance. Trees and shrubs get their own chapter, as do wildflower meadows, so all bases are covered.

But this is far more comprehensive than just a planting-for-pollinators guide. Goulson explains how to identify eight of the most common bumblebees, their annual life cycle, and the best types of nesting sites. His fascination with bumblebees and other pollinators is infectious, from solitary bees to beetles and the dark-edged bee fly, "a lovable, furry, flying powder-puff". This book might open your eyes – and gardens – to the myriad mini-wonders that too often go unnoticed.

BOOK REVIEWS



POLLINATION: THE ENDURING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLANT AND POLLINATOR

by Timothy Walker

Princeton University Press, £25
ISBN 978-0691203751

A scientific text book on pollination that will interest students of biology or anyone with an interest in conservation and the natural world.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener.

Pollination has long been an object of fascination for biologists, especially since Darwin studied and wrote about it. His confident postulation of the existence of a moth that could reach the nectaries of the orchid *Angraecum sesquipedale*, requiring an absurd proboscis some 45cm long, was vindicated by the discovery after his death of Morgan's sphinx moth. This and other well-known examples of intricate relationships between plants and animals are described and beautifully photographed in this book.

There are scarab beetles that spend their entire lives foraging and copulating within the heated flowers of the giant water-lily *Victoria amazonica*, to be turfed out at a moment of their hosts choosing and ushered towards their next lodging, a fresh flower with its stigma ready for pollination.

There are orchids where nectar is fermented to become alcoholic – the insect imbibers of this brew are liable to tarry longer and so easier to hitch with the all-important parcel of pollen.

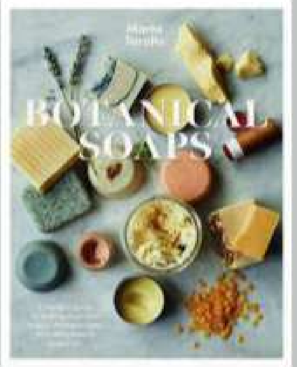
Lurid and Byzantine examples of these extraordinary relationships abound, but in his comprehensive work the author is at pains to point out the importance of seemingly more prosaic means of pollination such as that by wind, or by generalist pollinators, stressing that the more elaborate pollination syndromes are only one strategy among many for plants to proliferate, and do not necessarily imply a higher level of evolution.

Walker is quite clear that for all our study, what we do know about this subject is vastly overshadowed by what we don't, and by what we may never know before it is destroyed.

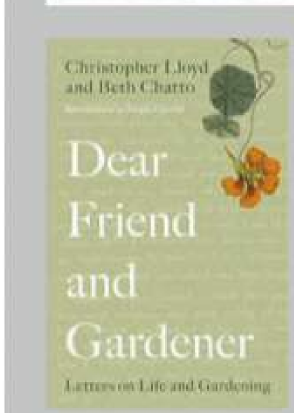
The book concludes with chapters on the importance of pollination to humankind and on its conservation. But the purely descriptive chapters of the book, which point again and again at the fragile intricacies of the natural world, offer the most eloquent argument for conservation of all.

Other books

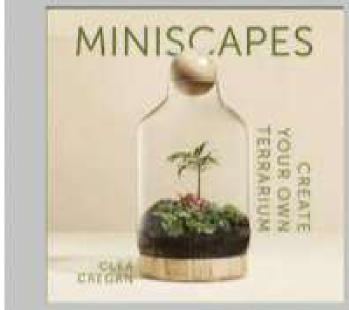
From botanical beauty products, to green ideas for your home, escape the day-to-day with our selection of top reads.



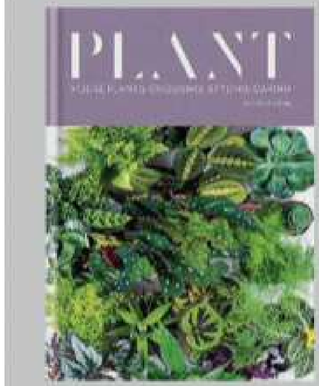
BOTANICAL SOAPS
by Marta Tarallo,
Quadrille Publishing, £15,
ISBN 978-1787136687
Add a touch of green to your morning routine with this practical guide on how to help reduce your bathroom plastic and create a range of homemade beauty products.


Christopher Lloyd and Beth Chatto
Dear Friend and Gardener
Letters on Life and Gardening

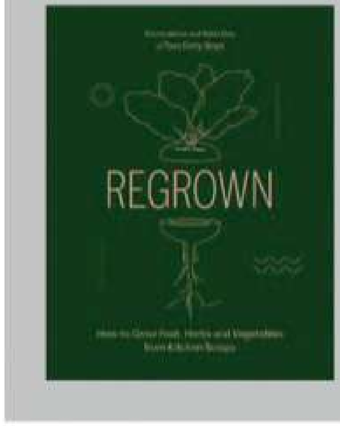
DEAR FRIEND AND GARDENER
by Christopher Lloyd and Beth Chatto, Aurum Press, £9.99,
ISBN 978-0711255807
This much anticipated re-release displays a wonderful collection of letters between the late greats Christopher Lloyd and Beth Chatto.



MINISCAPES
by Clea Cregan, Hardie Grant Books, £10, ISBN 978-1743796863
Clea Cregan offers 16 projects covering four biomes for all skill levels. A perfect guide if you're limited on space but wish to expand your plant collection.



PLANT
by Gynelle Leon,
Octopus Publishing Group, £15,
ISBN 978-1784726744
This delightful book guides you through how to style and care for your house plants. Its stunning photo gallery makes this a visually appealing read.



REGROWN
by Paul Anderton and Robin Daly,
Hardie Grant UK, £16.99,
ISBN 978-1784884031
With wonderful photography, clear steps and 20 projects, this book will inspire you to get green fingered and grow your own vegetables purely from waste.

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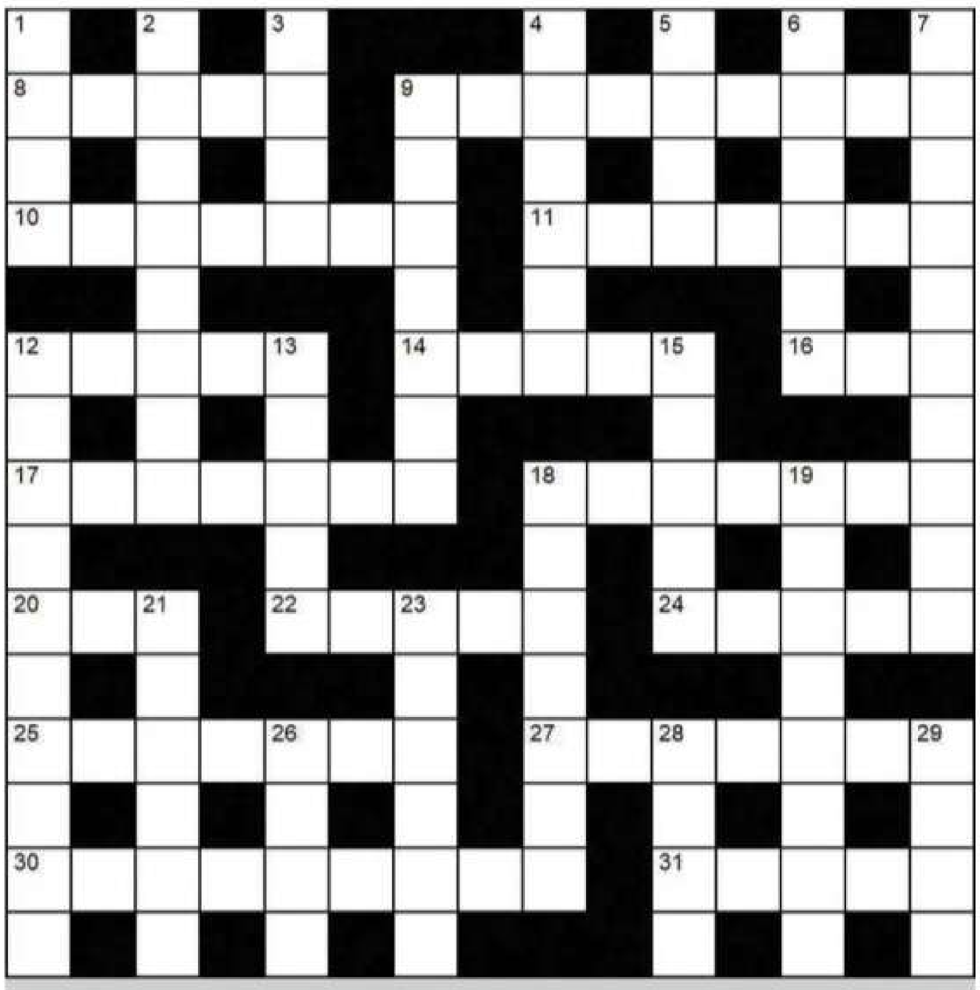
Crossword



ACROSS

8 The heath genus (5)
9 Genus of evergreens in Proteaceae family – large live variation (9)
10 Twisting stem-like structure of eg sweet pea (7)
11 Largest group of tulip cultivars – 'Complete Victory' (7)
12 Plant of *Geum* genus… found in Newhaven Square (5)
14 Took care of (top removed) and finished (5)
16 Our star provider of energy for plant growth! (3)
17/15 down Common name for *Osteospermum* (7,5)
18 Umbellifer, genus *Meum*, with curry-flavoured seeds – initially produced in single mutation (7)
20 Common name for a *Tillandsia*, ___ plant (3)
22 A *Symphyotrichum* (Michaelmas daisy) named after Polynesian island (5)
24 Agave relative eg Spanish dagger 5)
25 Pointedly made holes for seeds? (7)
27 Describes fertiliser of plant or animal origin (7)
30 Mullein genus, with tall flower spikes – begins with a part of speech (9)
31 An appropriately named early spring cabbage (5)

DOWN

1 Curved or crooked (4)
2 A common name for *Leonotis leonurus* – mixed in aloes, right (5,3)
3 Maiden needs this for a delicate fern (4)
4 A cold frame normally isn't ____ (6)
5 Fungi, gigantic, hiding a series of compact chrysanthemums (4)
6 Eg the feathery flowers of pampas grass (6)
7 Genus of bulb 'Cape cowslip' – oddly, an achillea! (10)
9 Cauliflower '_____', with dense white head – and large sailing ship (7)
12 A named *Pulmonaria*, changing from pink to blue – first seen in the Garden of Eden? (4,3,3)
13 Hessian bags often used to contain rootballs (5)
15 See 17 across
18 Fragrant, double-flowering white rose – 'Spume'? (3,4)
19 Genus of 'shoo-fly' plants with papery seed cases – can drain unusually (8)
21 'Herb ___', the 'Stinking cranesbill' plant (6)
23 A trefoil such as lucerne – from myself and little Richard (6)
26 A bract is a modified one (4)
28 *Salix caprea* aka pussy willow or __ willow (4)
29 A bamboo stem – initially, creates unusual leaf markings (4)

• **Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the May issue**

SOLUTIONS TO THE MARCH ISSUE'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Berberis **6** Malic **9** Opal **10** Blast **11** Rain **12** Corona **13** Leonotis **14** Blanket **16** Checks **18** Lamium **20** Munchkin **22** Turk's cap **25** Spathe **26** Elka **27** Arena **28** Haft **29** Susan **30** Daydream. **DOWN 2** Euphorbia **3** Ballota **4** Rubra **5** Shallot **6** Motto **7** Liriope **8** Chili **15** Kim **16** Can **17** Kniphofia **19** Inkcaps **20** Mophead **21** Heather **23** Uglis **24** Chain **25** Shady.

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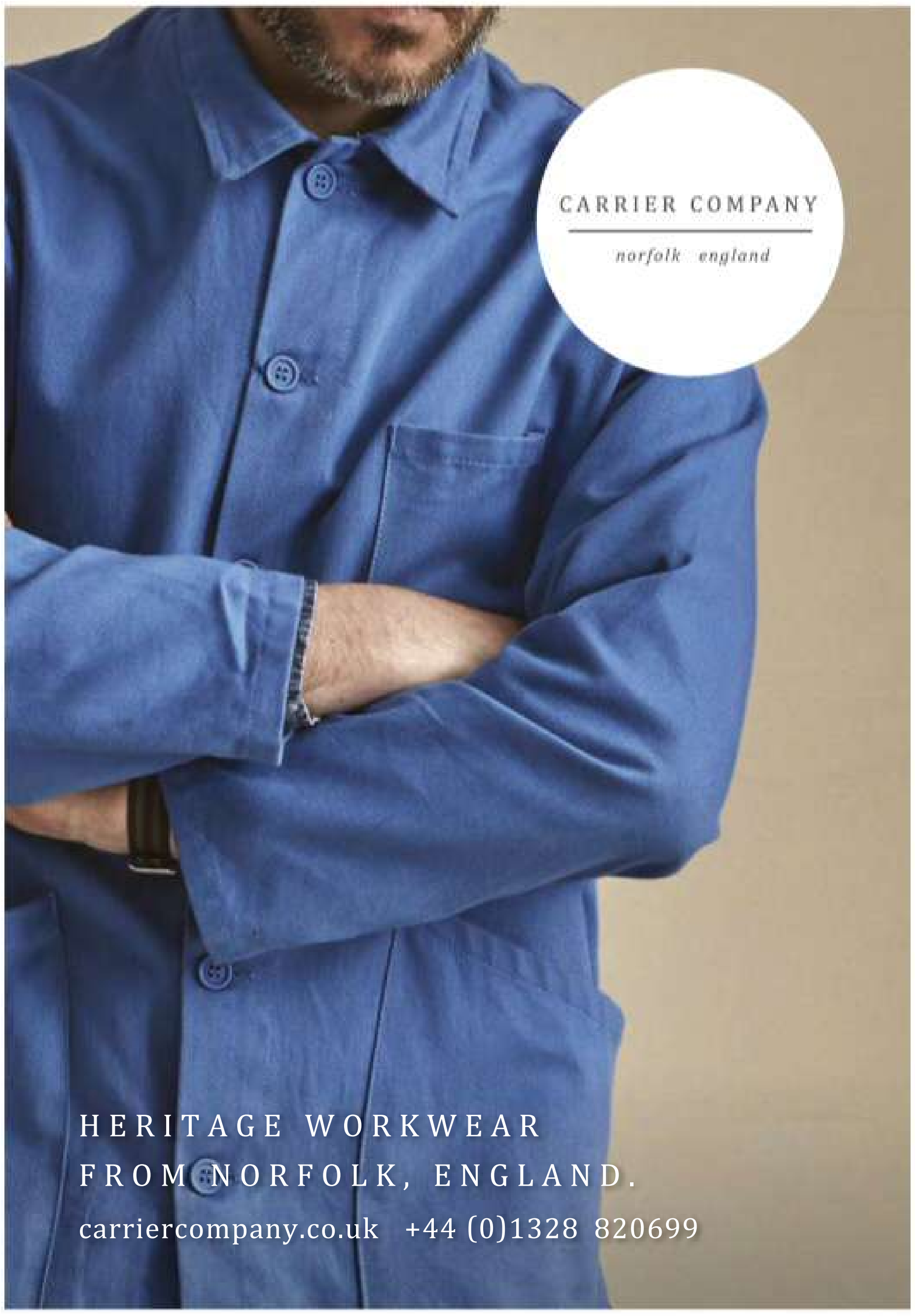
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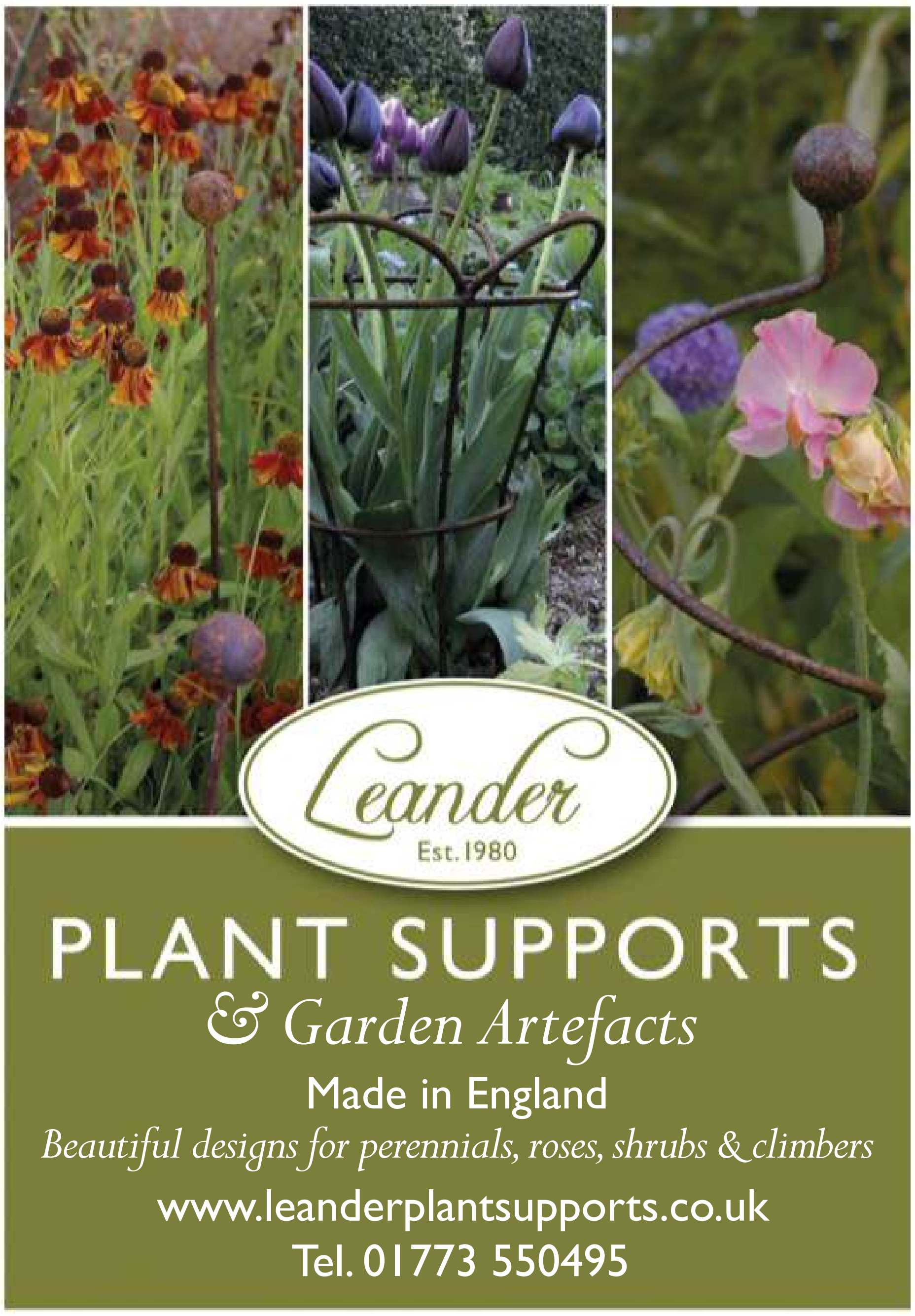

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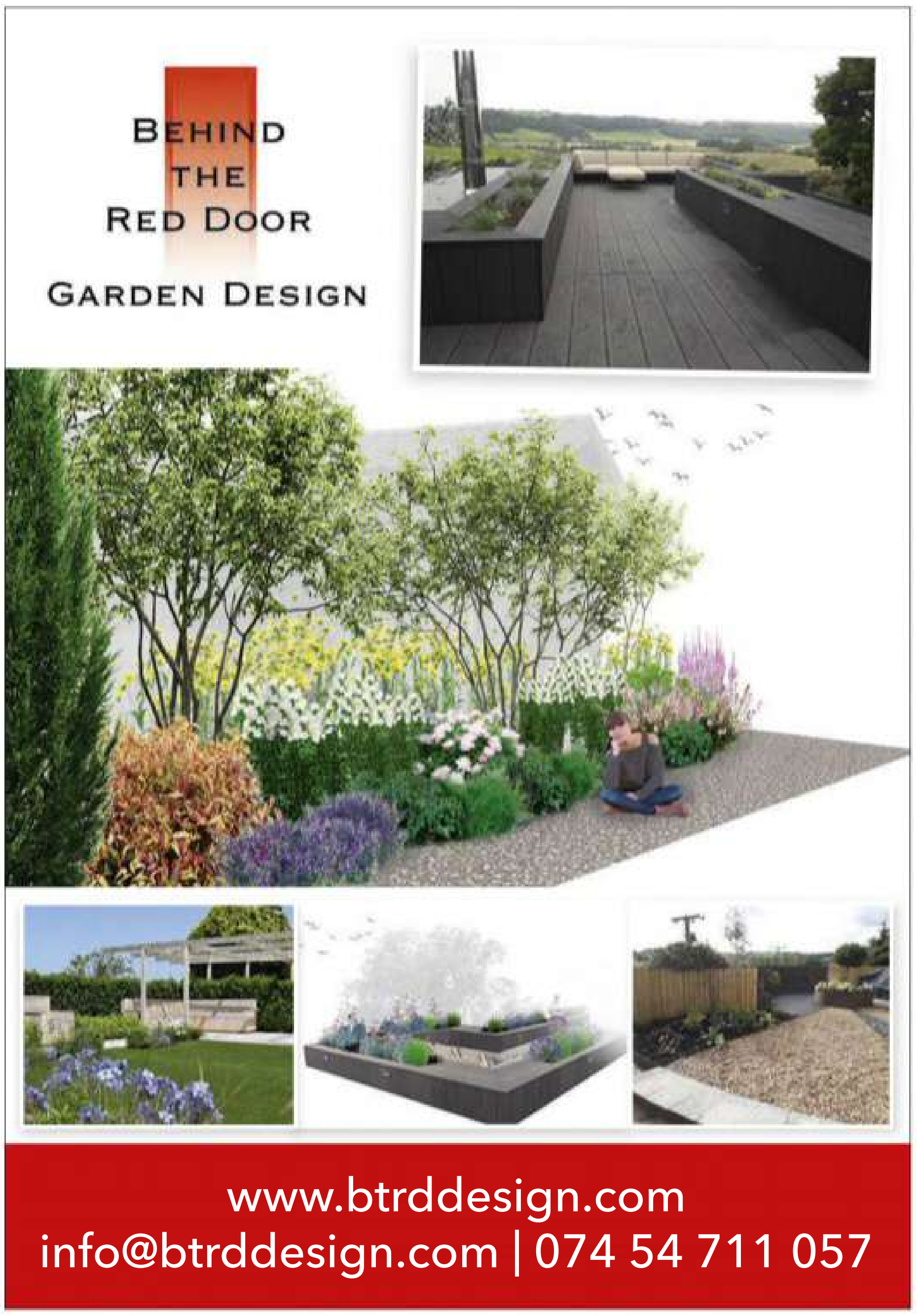

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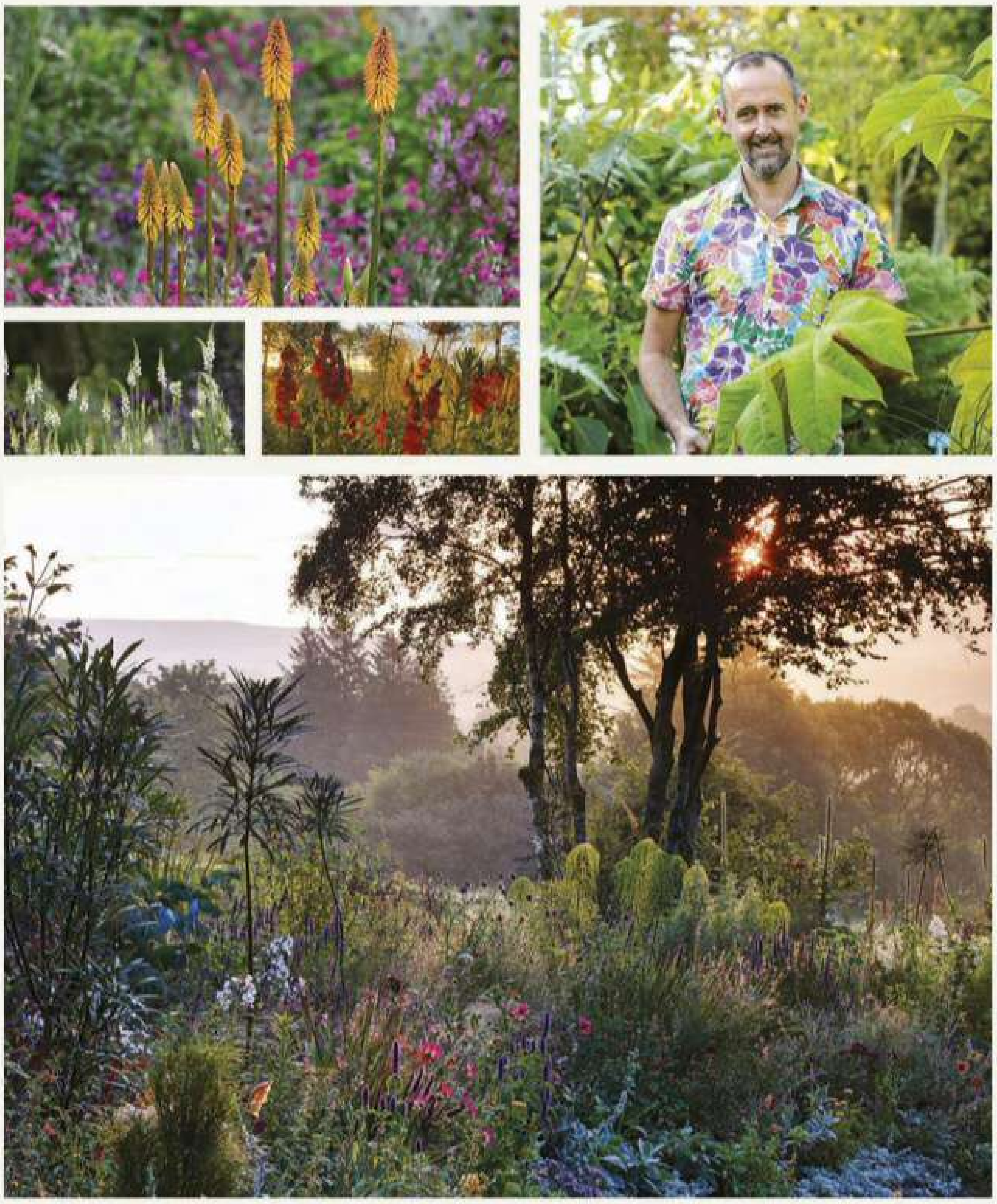

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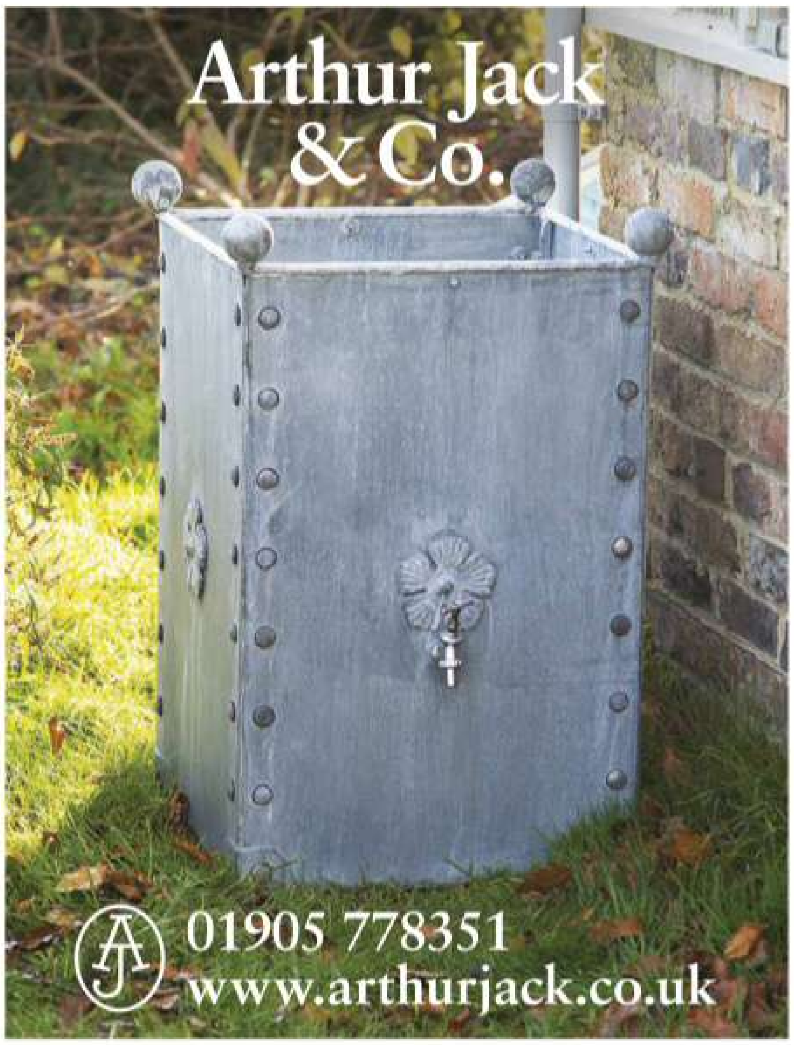

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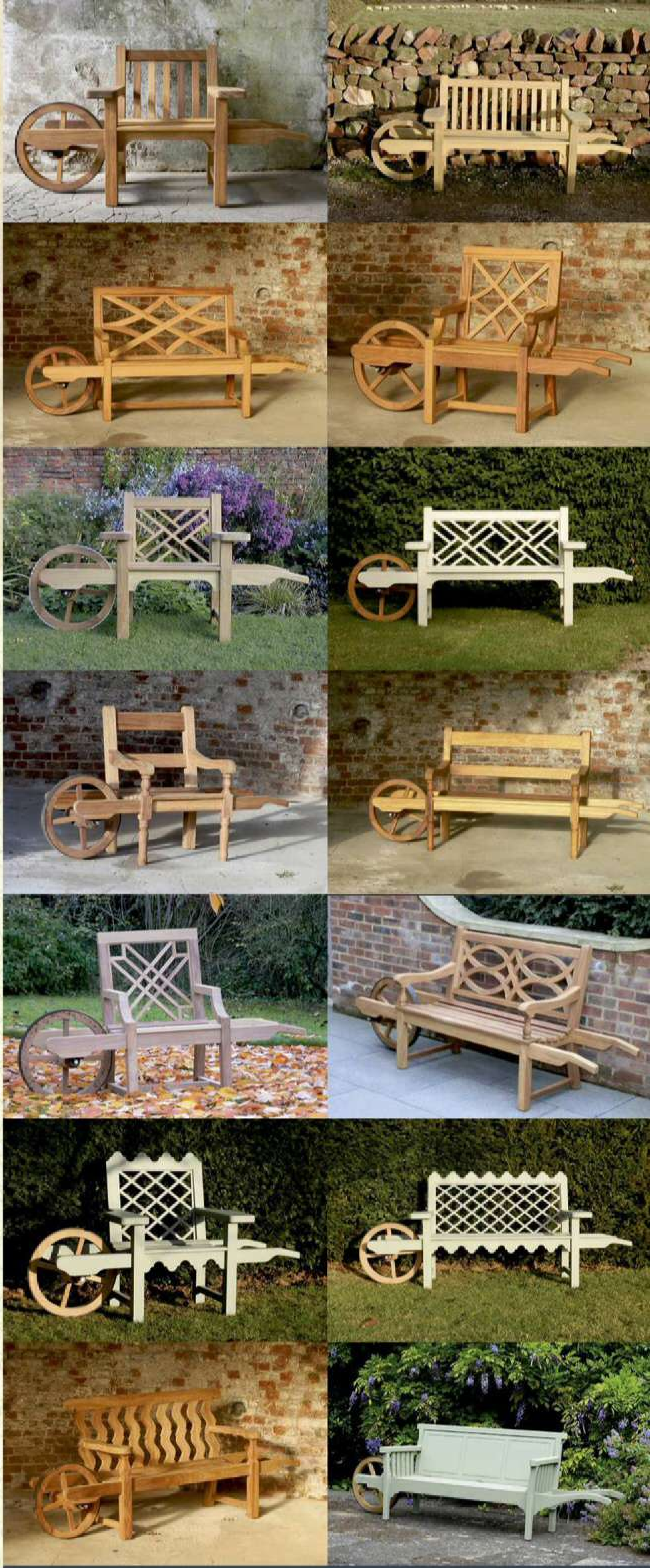

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The nursery grows over 600 varieties of snowdrop and the current list offers 300-plus new and old varieties for sale. Edulis nursery also specialises in shade-loving plants with a large range of ferns. There is also a range of rare and unusual edible plants.

edulis.co.uk
07802 812781

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langthorns.com
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beethamnuseries.co.uk
015395 63630

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meadowgatenursery.co.uk
07736 523262

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woottensplants.com
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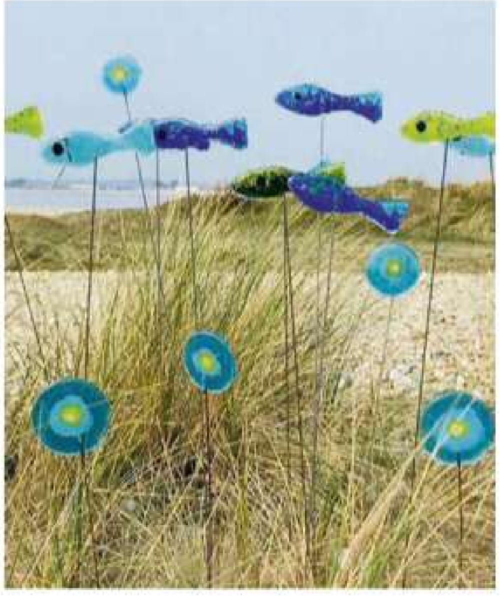

A small family-run business on the Sussex Coast making stainless steel, stained glass columns, fused glass fish and lollipops, which are specifically designed for the garden, bringing added height and colour to your borders. Everything is handmade to order. Prices start at £18 for a small lollipop.

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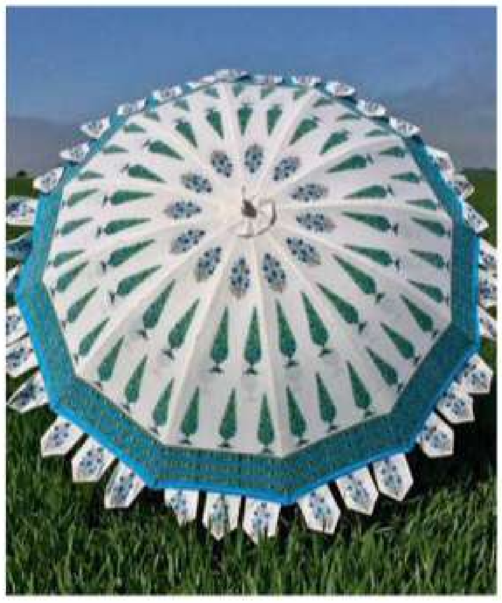

Kasakosa was born out of our love for life, started in the search for something more, developed in the pursuit of passion. Living the search for something greater than yourself. Kasakosa is our way of sharing something more with the people we love.

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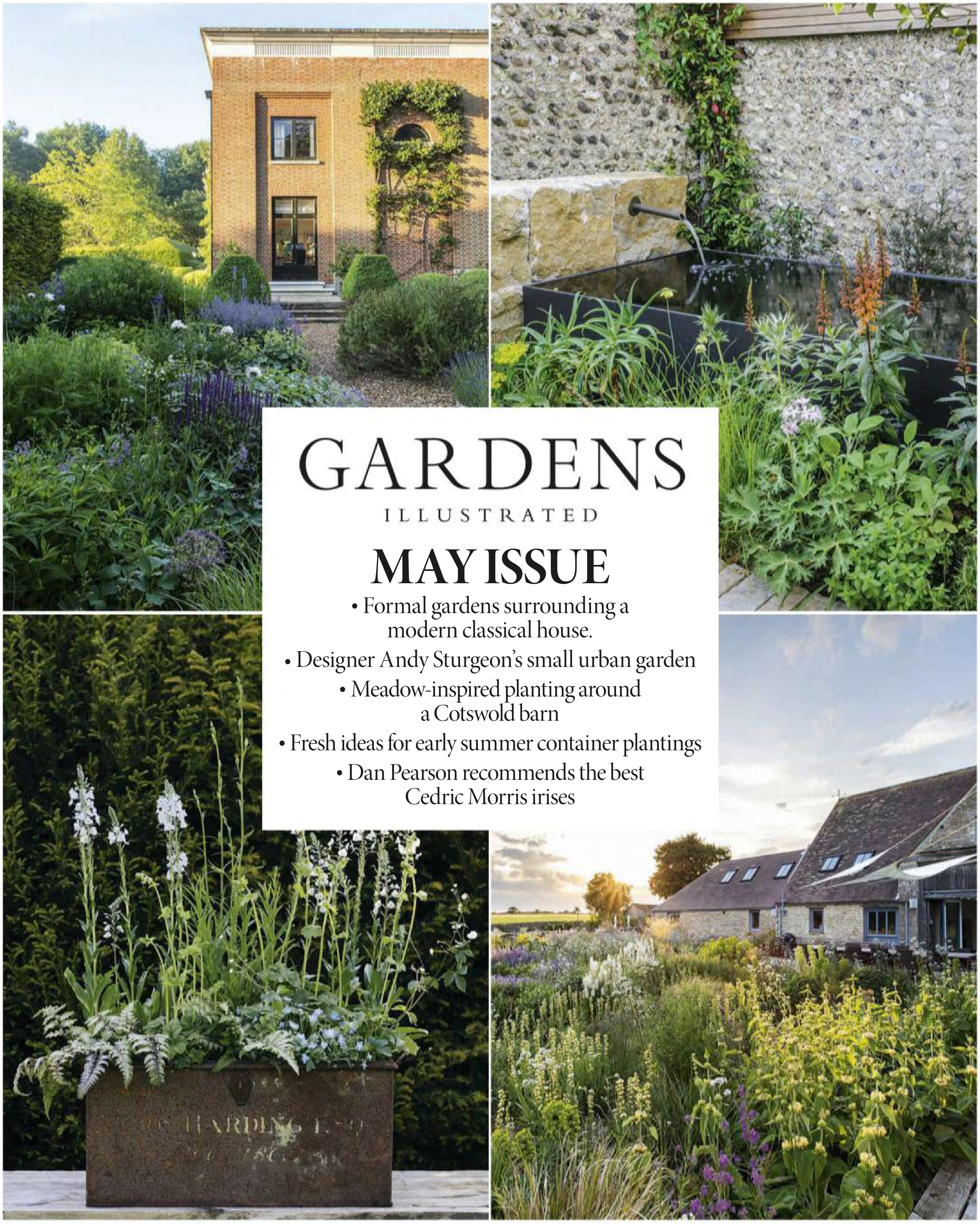

GARDENS
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MAY ISSUE

- Formal gardens surrounding a modern classical house.
- Designer Andy Sturgeon's small urban garden
- Meadow-inspired planting around a Cotswold barn
- Fresh ideas for early summer container plantings
- Dan Pearson recommends the best Cedric Morris irises

JASON INGRAM, EVA NEMETH, CLAIRE TAKACS

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How to spend a gardener's weekend in…

Delaware Valley

Stretching from Wilmington in Delaware to Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, the Delaware Valley is regarded as the horticultural heart of the USA by those who live there

The new US President has been known to shed a tear over the state of Delaware – unsurprising to gardeners familiar with the Delaware Valley. Just around the corner from the Biden house in Greenville, the botanic garden at **Mount Cuba** gives an idea of what to expect: in this case, a vast public park dedicated to native plants and historic collections, on a formerly private estate. Join the dots between the state's largest city Wilmington and Philadelphia in the neighbouring state of Pennsylvania by starting at **Hagley**, the house and garden (and gunpowder works) of an 18th-century French émigré whose family name – Du Pont – still resonates in international industry as well as in gardening circles.

Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library.

Château country

Winterthur is another Du Pont estate, last in the hands of one Henry Francis, a gardener and antique collector. Before crossing the border into Pennsylvania, stop at **Buckley's Tavern** for a taste of seasonal, local cooking. Another Du Pont (Pierre S) created **Longwood** at his former home, now a glorious centre of horticultural excellence. The local town of **Kennett Square** is small and lively, with 20 restaurants representing five different regions in Mexico. Head to nearby **Taquito Feliz** for breakfast, as suggested by specialist tomato growers **Happy Cat Farm**. Besides the Friday farmers' market, the **Kennett Bookhouse** is notable. For a barnful of used books, head to **Baldwin's Book Barn**.

Souvenirs

Best brunch The Whip Tavern, a beautiful drive from Kennett Square, PA

Best gourmet market Talula's Table, Kennett Square, PA

Best groceries Wolff's Apple House, Media, PA

Best pick-me-up La Michoacana ice cream, Kennett Square, PA; Merchant Bar, Wilmington, DE

Best browse Terrain at Styers, Glen Mills, PA

NC Wyeth House Studio.

Wyeth country

At Chadds Ford, the **Brandywine Conservancy and Museum of Art** displays work by three generations in the Wyeth family of artists, as well as aiming to preserve some of the landscapes they've painted. Guided tours examine the nearby studios of **NC Wyeth** and son Andrew, as well as the latter's long-term inspiration, Kuerner Farm. **Brandywine River Antiques Market** is another barn, full of delightful old things. Continuing along Route 1, turn off at Glen Mills for **Terrain**. Conceived as a better class of garden centre by the brains behind Anthropologie, this flagship store incorporates picturesque buildings from the previous nursery, and is a favourite stop-off place for lunch and plant-related things. **Wolff's Apple House** in Media, is the farm shop of dreams, with heirloom varieties of fruit and vegetables, and a good plant nursery. Going strong since 1910.

Terrain.

GARDEN SHED

Country club

The Main Line beckons, an affluent string of towns originally named after the commuter train line that whisks people out of Philadelphia to their quieter homes. **Stoneleigh** in Villanova, is a recently revived estate, where American native plants are being incorporated into an older plan by Frederick Law Olmstead. **Jenkins Arboretum**, Devon, epitomises the wealth of flora and arboreta in this area. **Carolyn's Shade Garden**, Bryn Mawr, comes highly recommended, as does the plantperson's nursery **Mostardi Nursery**, Newtown Square.

Stoneleigh.

Wayne is also home to **Chanticleer**, the highly regarded pleasure garden. In the summer months, Chanticleer stays open once a week for evening picnics. Take some cooked lobsters, as well as shucked oysters to go from **Hill's Quality Seafood Market** – and don't forget a bottle of something crisp.

Two more for the road

A storied garden need not be moneyed, and **Wyck** in Philadelphia is famously authentic. Last renovated by its former long-term owners in 1824, this remnant of America's oldest planned city also harbours its oldest rose garden. **Bartram's Garden** is another marker on the time line of New World horticulture, being the USA's oldest botanical garden. John Bartram was a Quaker plant hunter, philosopher and seed man, who counted George Washington among his friends and customers.

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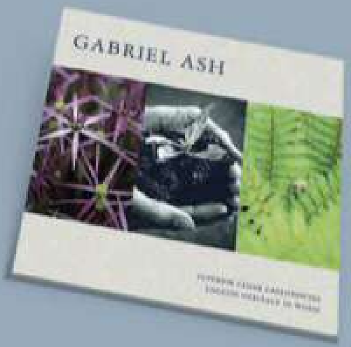

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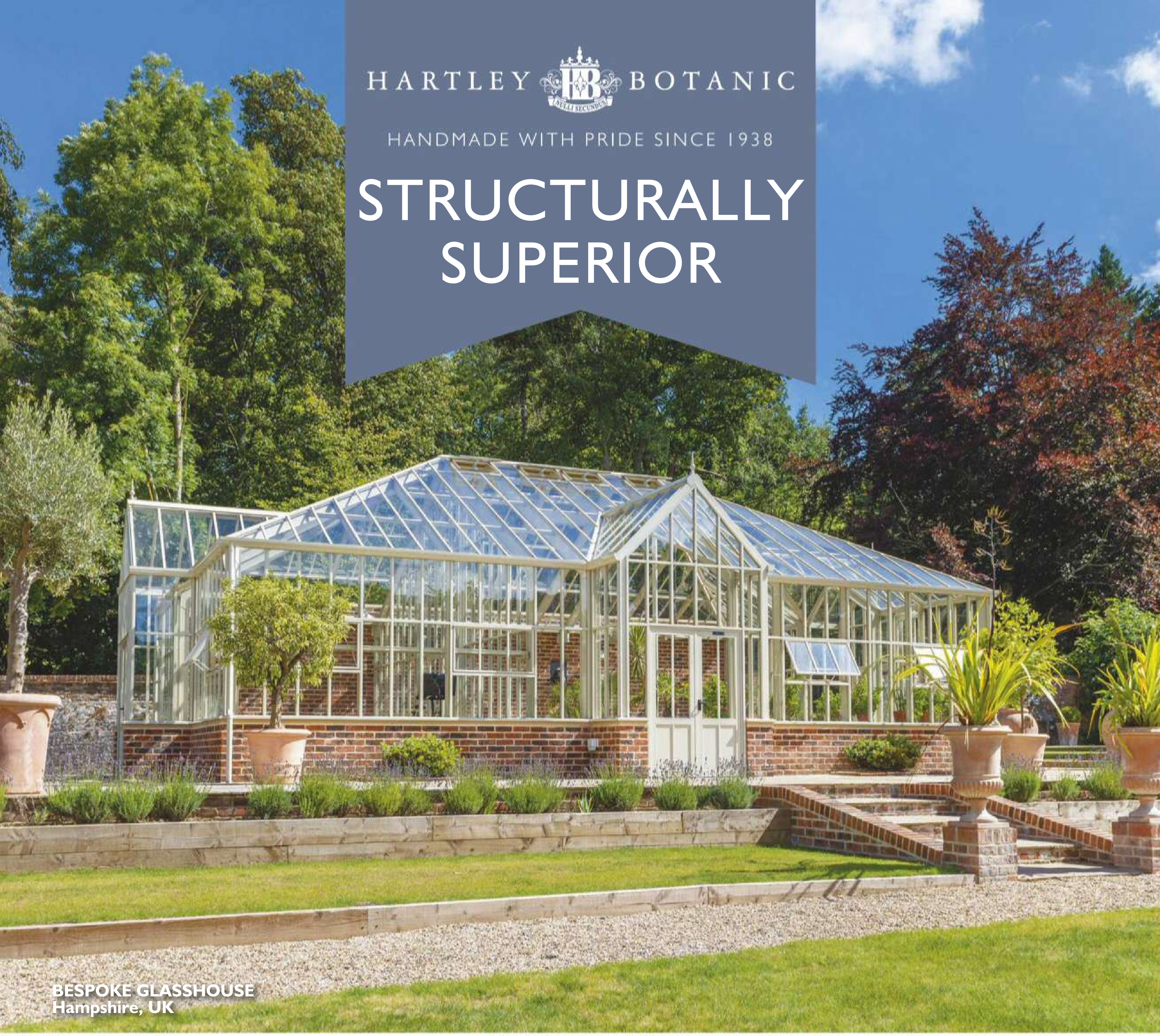
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